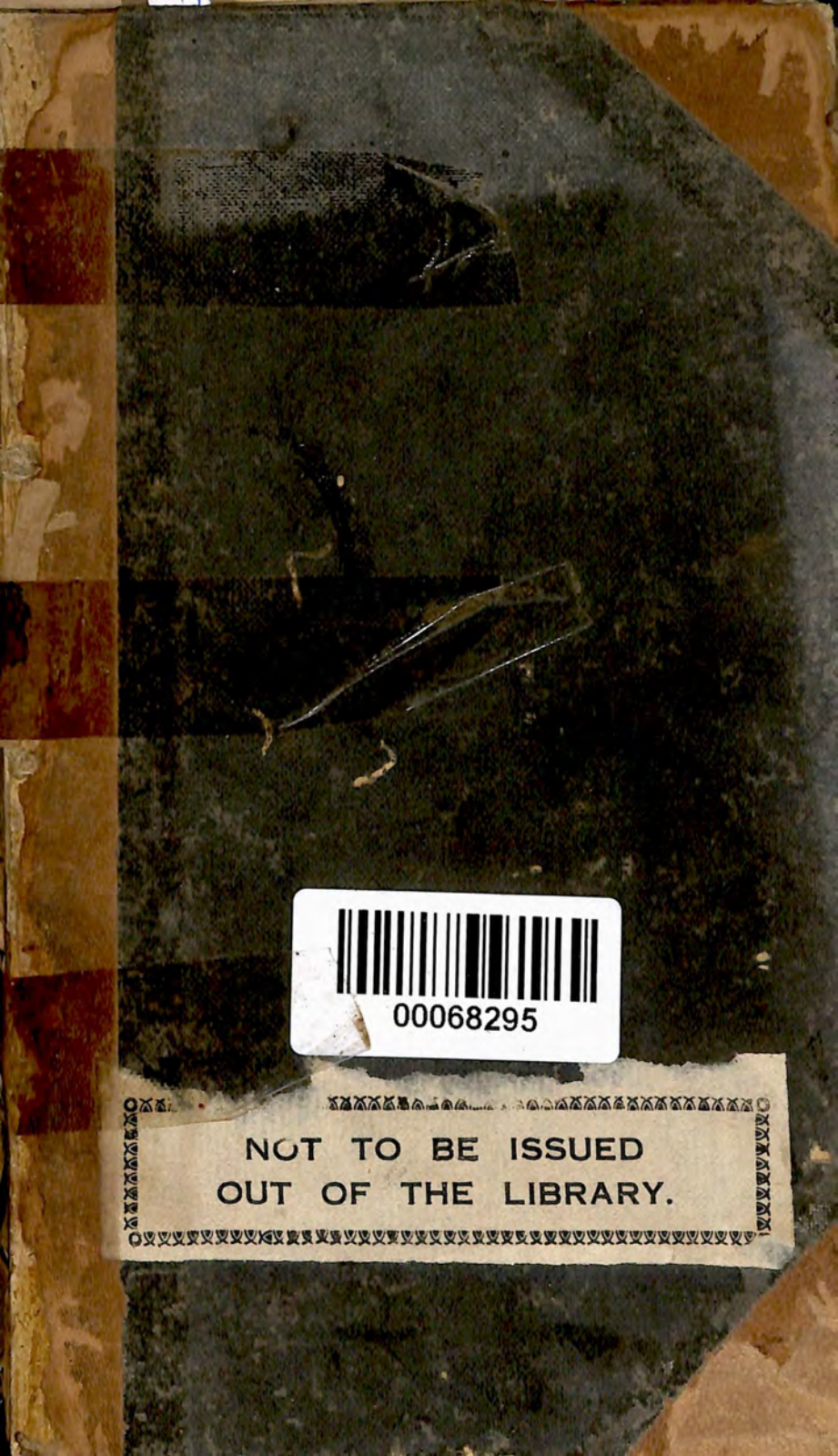
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DISCOURSES

ON THE

SOCINIAN CONTROVERSY.

DISCOURSES

ON

THE PRINCIPAL POINTS

OF THE

SOCINIAN CONTROVERSY.

BY RALPH WARDLAW, D.D.

GLASGOW.

FOURTH EDITION, MUCH ENLARGED.

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PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

"WHY publish a new Volume, on a subject which has already produced so many?"—Were I to answer this question by pleading the solicitations of friends, I should speak the truth; for such solicitations have been numerous, and some of them entitled to my highest deference. Yet I should present an apology, neither satisfying to the Public, nor to myself. For if an Author is not convinced, in his own judgment, that his work is either called for by particular circumstances, or likely to be serviceable to the cause of truth, he ought to possess sufficient fortitude to resist the wishes of others; and if he professes to publish in compliance with these wishes *alone*, he will find very few possessed of sufficient charity to give him credit.

When the Unitarian Chapel in this City was opened, and the Sermon "On the Grounds of Unitarian Dissent," which Mr. Yates had preached on that occasion, was given to the public, I happened, from an entirely different cause, to have my thoughts directed towards the principal points of the

Socinian controversy;—and, in revolving various subjects for a series of monthly Sabbath-evening Discourses, it occurred to me, that, at such a time, when the leading doctrines of Christianity were openly impugned and denied, and the sentiments of those who held them in many particulars grossly misrepresented, a short course on these points might be seasonable and useful.

Satisfied that we pay no compliment to our own sentiments, when we are startled by any apprehension of discussion possibly making proselytes to those of our opponents,—I could not acquiesce in the opinion, that the best way on such occasions is, to suffer error to pass in silence, and to fall of itself. I thought, and still think, that this procedure is giving to such error an undue advantage. It is putting it in the power of its advocates to say, that we dread investigation, and find it our wisdom to be quiet:—it is leaving the weak, the wavering, and the ill-informed, to be the dupes of misrepresentation, or a prey to the wiles of sophistry, and the imposing influence of high pretensions to learning and candour:—it is lulling the multitude of nominal professors of the truth in satisfaction with a vague and unexamined assent to a system, respecting which they hardly know "what they say, or whereof they affirm:"—and to the far greater multitude of persons who do not think on these matters at all, it is furnishing a plausible excuse for continued carelessness. They will not take the trouble to examine what its professed adherents are not at the pains to defend; and they pursue their wonted course of thoughtless impiety, with one vacant reflection, suggested by what they see and hear, that "after all, these

heretics, as they are called, must surely have a good deal to say for themselves."

These discourses were favoured, in the delivery of them, with a measure of public countenance, as gratifying as it was unexpected:—and the same reasons which suggested the idea of preaching them, afterwards induced me to consent to their publication. I hope they may, in however small a degree, contribute, by the Divine blessing, to promote the reception and the influence of that truth, with the establishment and progress of which are connected the glory of God and the salvation of men.

Local circumstances frequently procure a reading to new works, when old ones on the same subject, even although of superior merit, would continue to lie neglected. Should no new views or new arguments be advanced, still it is needful, as different times and different places have their peculiar prevailing tastes, to present what is old in new and various forms.

But besides this consideration (although of itself sufficient), —it has frequently struck me as a defect of considerable magnitude, in some of the treatises which have been published on the subjects handled in this volume, particularly the Divinity of Christ, that the writers have lessened the effect which their works are designed to produce by *attempting more than enough*. Instead of confining themselves to those passages of scripture, in which the argument is prominent and palpable, resting their cause on these, and leaving it to their readers to apply the general principle, when thus successfully established, to the interpretation of other passages;—they have, with the laudable view of showing how full the Bible is

of the particular doctrine they defend, exerted their ingenuity, with various success, in bringing texts to bear upon it, of which the application is dubious, or, even when satisfactorily ascertained, by no means impressive. I need not point out the various ways in which this mode of conducting the argument is fitted to hurt the cause in which it is employed, and to afford an advantage to its adversaries. It is just as if a person, wishing to present a view of the evidence of the truth of Christianity from the fulfilment of prophecy, instead of selecting those grand and leading predictions, of which the accomplishment has been notorious and unquestionable, should occupy his pages in explaining and supporting, however ingeniously, his own interpretation of particular passages in the prophets, respecting which the wisest commentators have hitherto differed in judgment. It has been my aim, in the following Discourses, to avoid this defect. Whether I have at all succeeded, it is not mine to determine.

I have only further to observe, that in defending what I conceive to be the essential articles of scriptural truth, I have confined myself entirely to the Scriptures themselves. Those who wish to trace the history of early opinions on these subjects, may satiate themselves with the copious works which have been written on both sides. For my own part, although satisfied of the propriety of not allowing the opposers of the truth to occupy even this ground, I yet cannot help considering it as a monstrous insult to the Divine Author of revelation, to admit the supposition for a moment, that, on such subjects as these, it should be necessary to wade through the multifarious opinions of antiquity, in order to understand his mean-

ing. I say *on such subjects as these:* for if on *these* points there is such a want of explicitness,—points that regard the object of worship, the state and prospects of man, and the foundation of his hopes for eternity,—on what subjects shall we look for clearness and precision? If it were indeed the case, that, on such topics as these, the Bible is indeterminate, requiring, for the explanation of its language, the commentary of ancient opinion, the infidel would be furnished with an argument against its Divine origin, more powerful than any he has ever been able to produce.

In the following discourses, additions, omissions, and other alterations, have been occasionally, but sparingly, made. In general, they are printed very nearly as they were delivered. I once had thoughts of dividing them anew, into sections of as nearly equal lengths as possible; but, upon reconsideration, gave up the plan.—The chief difference in the arrangement is, that the recapitulations and the conclusion, on the subject of the Divinity of Christ, are here thrown into a distinct Discourse; which increases the number from eleven to twelve.

I commend the work to the blessing of God, and to the candid judgment of men.

R. W.

Glasgow, April 30th, 1814.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

SINCE the publication of the first Edition of these Discourses, a Work has appeared in answer, entitled "A Vindication of Unitarianism, &c. by James Yates, M. A."—To those parts of that Work which seem to call for particular notice, it is the Author's intention, as soon as other engagements will permit him, to reply in a distinct publication. If God shall give him opportunity to fulfil this intention, his reasons for forming it, as well as his judgment of the work in question, will then fully appear; and the evidence for the great doctrines of the gospel, which it has been his endeavour to defend, will be rendered, he trusts, still more complete and satisfactory, by various additional proofs (some of them unconsciously afforded by his opponent), and by the removal of the most plausible objections. He is induced to intimate his intention at present, chiefly to account for the circumstance, that although some considerable part of this Edition of the Discourses has been printed since the appearance of Mr. Yates's Reply, no particular reference is made to any of its contents.

In the present Edition, several notes have been added, and some others have been enlarged; a number of verbal amendments have been made in the style; and the illustration of 1 John v. 20. the text of the Discourses on the Divinity of Christ, has, in compliance with the suggestion of a Reviewer in the Christian Herald, been transferred from the second to the third Discourse. Were the Author to say that he has not been gratified by the commendations bestowed on his Work, in that and in other publications, no person would give him credit for any thing else than affectation. He has only, therefore, to express his regret, that the strictures of other censors of literature should not have appeared in sufficient time to enable him more extensively to avail himself of them, for the improvement of the Volume.

Glasgow, April 17th, 1815.

PREFACE

TO

THE FOURTH EDITION.

For a considerable time before receiving intimation from my publishers of the call for a new Edition of these Discourses, I had formed the purpose of enlargement, on one point especially, —the doctrine of Atonement,—which had appeared to my own mind to admit of it with advantage, if not even to require it.—In conformity with this purpose, considerable additions have been made to one of the Discourses on this all-important subject; and an entirely new Discourse has been introduced, on a very interesting collateral topic,—the connexion between the doctrine of our blessed Lord's Divinity and the sufficiency and efficacy of his sacrifice; or, in other words, on the question whether that sufficiency and efficacy arose exclusively from the appointment of God, or, along with such appointment, from the intrinsic value of the offering; —and whether, consequently, the Divine dignity of the Redeemer being admitted, a redemption of inferior worth was at all supposable, or possible:—a discussion, from which I should be sorry that any reader were scared by the appear-

ance it may have to his mind of unprofitableness or presumption; for, if I may at all judge of others by myself, it will be found, in no inferior degree, under some especially of its aspects, both interesting and beneficial, and, withal, in perfect harmony with that unpresuming lowliness of spirit, which shrinks from intruding into the "secret things that belong unto the Lord,"—from attempting to penetrate beyond the sacred limits of Divine discovery.

It subsequently occurred to me, that, as I had no intention of re-publishing my Reply to Mr. Yates's Vindication of Unitarianism, there were some portions of that Volume which might with advantage be transfused into the text and notes of the Discourses; that by this means the original work might be rendered more complete, and by consequence, as I hoped, more acceptable and useful. This has accordingly been attempted. It may readily be conceived, however, that such transfusion was not without its difficulties. That which occurs in its appropriate place in one work cannot always, without a somewhat troublesome process of assimilation and adjustment, find a natural and easy position in another: and few things are more unseemly and offensive to taste, than a patch-work of this description, where the diversity of texture is apparent, and the joinings either manifest, or but clumsily and awkwardly concealed. I flatter myself with having accomplished this part of my task pretty successfully:—at least I think there is reason to hope, that those inserted passages will elude the observation of the reader, (unless he be a very lynx in quick discrimination), which, in glancing through the Volume, have generally eluded the Author's own.

—In consequence, however, of the difficulty stated—(a difficulty greatly enhanced when the transferences are to be made from a work of personal controversy, where the matter of which the Author wishes to avail himself is inseparably mixed up with references to the arguments, and citations of the words, of a particular opponent),—I have been constrained to leave behind a great deal which I should otherwise willingly have used:—so that if the "REPLY" ever possessed any value, it may be said still to retain the larger portion of it.

The fancy, I believe, has been sported at least, if not seriously entertained, by some visionaries in medical physiology, that by the transfusion of the blood of one animal into the veins of another, a transference of constitutional temperament might be effected, and the dispositions of different creatures altered and modified at pleasure; that in this way, amongst the tribes of the brute creation, the description might be literally verified, of "the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid;" and that, among human subjects of the experiment, the tempers of the irascible and violent might be happily mollified by a liberal depletion from the fiery and impetuous current of their own circulation, and a proportionally copious injection from that of more sweet-blooded and gentle natures.—I have of course more faith, and so I presume will my readers, in the possibility of transfusing temper from book to book, than from person to person. The *heat* of controversy is proverbial; the necessity of repressing its inflammatory tendencies must be felt by every one who engages in it; and, in spite of all wishes and resolutions to the contrary a little *bad blood* will occasionally be generated,

and allowed to flow, and to irritate the system. That some small portion of such distempered secretion should, on both sides, have found its way into the current of the controversy alluded to, will not be matter of wonder. When the too general character of theological disputation is considered, the entire absence of it would have been a juster, although a more pleasing, ground of surprise. The evil is one, of which the combatants themselves are not seldom, through the deceitfulness of the heart, hardly conscious. To their own minds they call it *spirit;* and they fancy it to be no more than *becoming* spirit,—included in compliance with the divine injunction to "contend earnestly for the faith:"—and, from their acquaintance with human nature, and their observation of facts, they are well aware how much it is relished by others, and how stagnant and lifeless controversy is felt to be without it.—For reasons of the same description, readers themselves also are but partial judges,—very generally estimating the proportions of the evil complained of, and assigning them to the several disputants, (unless in those few and flagrant cases in which the difference is so marked as to force itself on universal observation and acknowledgment) according to the predisposition of their own minds, and the sides on which they have respectively ranged themselves.—It is not for me, then, to say a word respecting the degree to which, on either side, the eagerness of opposition might chafe and inflame the blood, in the controversy between my quondam antagonist and myself. Whatever measure of this evil candour may conceive justly imputable to myself I sincerely regret; and I hope that, in the process of transfusion, I have succeeded in

leaving it behind, and rendering the present volume as free as could reasonably be expected of the common charge of *odium theologicum*, endeavouring to contend for the truth in the spirit which the faith of the truth inspires.

With these general remarks I would most willingly have dismissed this subject. After considerable hesitation, however, I feel that I cannot leave altogether unnoticed an advertisement prefixed by Mr. Yates to the Second Edition of his "Sequel to the vindication of Unitarianism;" because my allowing the present opportunity to pass without explanation, might be interpreted by him, either as a disingenuous and pitiful way of admitting what I had not the frankness openly to confess, or as indicative of an unseemly and irritating disdain of himself and his complaint; to neither of which conclusions, as both would be alike groundless, should I wish to stand exposed.—In this advertisement, after appropriating all the courtesy in the conduct of our controversy to himself, and assigning the contumely to me,—(a representation, the justness of which I must leave to his own second thoughts and to the judgment of those who have read the works on both sides,)—he lodges a heavy complaint against me, for having charged him with "deliberate and wilful misrepre-" sentation," and for having allowed this charge to hang over him for six years, observing a profound silence, notwithstanding his having completely justified himself from the accusation, and called upon me as a man of honour and integrity, to correct my statements. Now, if I was then chargeable with wrong, the delinquency has since been doubled by the lapse of six years more.—Nothing assuredly should give us more

sincere pleasure, than finding ourselves at liberty to withdraw an accusation, which, in spite of the charity that "thinketh "no evil," we have been constrained to bring against our neighbour:—and, had Mr. Yates's justification of himself appeared to my mind as satisfactory as it did to his own, I trust I should have been enabled to do this long ago, with promptitude and cheerfulness. But it was otherwise: and, being sick of debate, I thought it better to be silent.

The simple facts are these. In professing to give a statement to his readers of the Trinitarian doctrine respecting the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, my opponent had presented a hideous caricature, in which the attributes of the two natures were blended and confounded together in heterogeneous and contradictory combination,—as if in his human nature he had been divine, and in his divine nature human. In a subsequent part of his Volume, he showed himself to be (what every one who knew his talents and information must have supposed him to be) perfectly aware, that, according to the views of Trinitarians, the two natures are conceived to remain distinct, their respective properties not being confounded, but continuing peculiar to each. In these circumstances, I really knew not how to avoid considering the misrepresentation as wilful.—I am aware, however, of the temptations that attend controversy. I am aware, that the impression on a man's own mind of the absurdity and contradiction involved in the doctrine of those whom he is opposing may be so very strong, as to form an almost irresistible temptation to him to incorporate with his statement of that doctrine what does not properly pertain to

it as held and professed by them, but is in reality the inferential deduction of his own mind. I am quite willing to allow my antagonist, if he chuse to take it, all the benefit of this view of the case. And the very manner in which he justifies himself gives it no small share of verisimilitude. For how does he proceed? Not by bringing forward from the writings of Trinitarians any statements at all resembling that which he himself had given, but by endeavouring to show, that the contradictions involved in his own representation are really inseparable from their doctrine; that if they do not hold them, they ought in consistency to hold them; and that the principle which, in *their* opinion, clears their doctrine of contradiction is, in *his* opinion, the very principle that leaves it open to the charge. But still,—however sincere he might be in his own conceptions of the Trinitarian doctrine, and however natural and strong the temptation to incorporate these conceptions with his statement of it,—still his doing so was unfair and reprehensible. His duty was, to present their doctrine, without addition or abatement, as actually professed by themselves:—and, having done this, he was quite at liberty to demonstrate, if he could, the inconsistencies and impossibilities which he conceived it to imply. But, instead of this fair and legitimate procedure, to bring forward, as a statement of their principles, what he knew there was not an individual amongst them that would own and subscribe to,—nay, what all of them, with a perfect unanimity, would reject with disgust and indignation;—this, I must still be allowed to think,—account for it on what principle we may,—was far

from being consistent with the recognized laws of controversial warfare.

Had I felt it my duty to reply to Mr. Yates' "Sequel," I might in substance have said all this long ago; and whilst on a few points of minor importance I might have found occasion for concession, the necessity would have been more frequent for pointed animadversion. But I could perceive no benefit likely to accrue to the cause of truth from protracting the discussion. There was enough before the public to enable them to form a judgment on all its material points; and to drain off an important controversy to its dregs has always appeared to me unfavourable to the interests of truth, by giving the appearance of undue consequence to subordinate and nonessential topics,—and leading inconsiderate readers, who cannot fancy that what is deemed worthy of a succession of pamphlets can be of little moment, to the formation of entirely mistaken estimates and false conclusions,—imagining the dispute to be still about the kernel, when it is only about a few fragments of the shell. Having no pleasure in disputing for disputation's sake, and convinced that no motive can justify its continuance beyond the point which the cause of truth appears absolutely to require, I thought it preferable, in these circumstances, to allow my opponent the advantage of the last word.

Whilst I have expressed my desire to avoid the indulgence and manifestation of any other temper than that of the most friendly good-will towards the *persons* of Unitarians—such as should lead me to seek from Heaven on their behalf the

influences of that Spirit whose existence they deny, to bring them to that Saviour whose divine dignity and atoning mediation they disown;—I wish it to be understood, distinctly and without reserve, that my charity is confined to their persons; —that towards their *system* I have no feeling but that of serious and settled abhorrence. Regarding it as a system which selects for denial and proscription every thing that I conceive to be distinctive of Christianity,—which divests it of all its principles of moral and spiritual influence,—which destroys the hopes of a guilty world by subverting and "sweeping with the besom of destruction" their only foundation,—which, in a word, annihilates the gospel;—with what other sentiments than those of grief and horror can I possibly contemplate it?

My judgment of its antichristian nature and tendencies has recently been receiving confirmation, from the discussions which have taken place amongst Unitarians themselves, on the question of the propriety or impropriety of *holding fellowship with unbelievers*,—that is, of receiving *deists*, such as they may deem honest in their infidelity and moral in their deportment, to the communion of the *Christian* church! The question is certainly a strange one; and the very fact of its having been admitted into serious controversy, is an additional proof that the charge of a near alliance between Unitarianism and infidelity, however indignantly refused, is far from being groundless.—In addition to the periodical discussion of this question in the Monthly Repository, a Sermon has just been published by the Rev. John James Tayler, B. A. of Manchester, with the express title—"ON COMMUNION WITH UNBE-

LIEVERS;" of which the *text* is 2 Cor. vi. 14—18. "Be ye *not* "unequally yoked together with unbelievers," &c.; and of which, strange to say, the *object* is to show that such unequal yoking is not only allowable, but even a duty. The preacher considers the apostle, though he uses the general term *unbelievers*, as meaning exclusively *idolaters*; and thus sets aside at once all application of the precept to our circumstances:—although, indeed, on the principles which he lays down, it is not even idolatry, as consisting simply in the worship of false gods, that would be a sufficient ground of exclusion from Christian communion, but only the immoral practices with which idolatry is associated. A well-meaning and virtuous *idolater*, if he should fall in with one, would have the same free admission, as a well-meaning and virtuous *deist*. He would give him the right hand of fellowship without scruple or hesitation; for he can find no "universal criterion of human character, but sincerity and moral rectitude."—"With all "my belief," says he, "in the intrinsic excellence of the "gospel,—notwithstanding my persuasion that most serious "and good persons would upon inquiry become Christians,— "I am not less convinced that there are cases, in which men "of the most upright minds and the most unexceptionable "moral characters have never attained to a firm faith in "revealed religion:"—"If we see a man, whose conversation "and manners are serious and moral, who is kind and good "to his fellow-creatures, who at once acknowledges and "exemplifies the great principles of morality and natural "religion, but whose inquiries into revelation have not "terminated in satisfactory belief,—such a man may deserve

" our compassion—may be entitled to our tenderest sympathy;
" but certainly he has done nothing to forfeit our esteem, our
" confidence, or our society. He employs his single talent
" well and faithfully; and if the choice lay between such a
" man and an inconsistent and immoral Christian, I should
" not hesitate for a moment to prefer the former for my
" friend:"—" Belief I certainly consider to have very great
" influence upon the character, and in this view most fervently
" pray for the universal diffusion of Christianity; but there
" are qualities which I believe to be still more acceptable to
" the Father of lights than the profession of the gospel itself,
" —I mean, the love of truth and the practice of virtue.
" Where these are, the great moral ends of existence are
" attained; without them, faith is but as sounding brass or a
" tinkling cymbal:"—" If it should happen, as, I believe, it
" has sometimes happened, that wise and good men have
" perceived the evidence, and acknowledged the obligation,
" of those great truths on which human virtue and happiness
" depend, and have adorned them in their practice, without
" feeling the authority of Christianity, let us rejoice that at
" least the moral purposes of human life have been answered
" by such men:"—" Even supposing a few men of sceptical
" principles should sometimes join in our public services, we
" must regard it as in the highest degree improbable, that,
" with their principles, they should take much share in the
" concerns of a Society whose distinguishing articles of belief
" they consider to be erroneous. But grant they do, how
" should we be better Christians, or they better men, by our
" driving them out from our communion?—If any seem fit

"persons for exclusion, it is not the unhappy few, who "doubt, and who may not altogether be accountable for their "doubts; but it is the immoral and worldly-minded Chris- "tians, who, with a better faith, exhibit a worse practice."

I am willing to go every length with Mr. Tayler, or any other man, in affirming the worthlessness, and far worse than worthlessness, of profession without practice. But let the reader only reflect, to what skeleton meagreness, to what an absolute nonentity, I might say, Christianity is reduced by the principles avowed in these extracts!—how thoroughly it is bereft of every thing peculiar, of every thing worthy of being even designated by a distinctive name,—how much less of being the subject of all prophetic and apostolic inspiration, of a four thousand years' preparatory administration of providence, and of the interposition of omnipotence by "signs and "wonders and diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit," to attest and recommend it to mankind!—We may, it seems, without it, have the knowledge and belief and influence of "those great truths on which human virtue and human happiness depend"—that is, we may without it be truly virtuous and truly happy:—without it, "the moral purposes of "human life may be answered,"—the "great moral ends "of existence may be attained:" and it is of course assumed, that such men, who have realized the great designs of their being, while they are happy here, are also safe for eternity,—possessing as they do what is "more acceptable to "the Father of lights than the belief and profession of the "Gospel,"—having "used their single talent well and faith- "fully,"—having "discerned the secret of happiness, and

"cultivated purity of heart and holiness of life, in the "fear of God." If all this be true, what is there that remains to be acquired by the reception of Christianity?—what do those "serious and good persons" gain, who, "upon "inquiry, become Christians?" Marvellously little, surely. They already know the great truths on which virtue and happiness depend, and have attained the grand moral ends of their existence;—they have the favour of God in this world, and a good hope for the world to come. In this way, every purpose is answered, for which I can imagine Divine revelation to be given:—nor can I readily fancy to myself where the room is for the "compassion" and "tenderest sympathy" to which a claim is put in in behalf of such unfortunate characters.—I was about to say, that on the principles of the preceding extracts, *becoming a Christian* consists merely in adopting certain opinions, without regard to their influence upon the heart and life;—inasmuch as it is only on some such supposition that we can ever obtain the anomalous and self-contradictory character of an "*immoral Christian*," as contrasted with the "serious and moral deist;" (for both must be considered, if the contrast be fair, as alike sincere in the belief of what they profess):—but in truth I am at a loss to know what *are* the opinions which, in embracing Christianity on Unitarian principles, such a deist is conceived to adopt, beyond those which he previously held. Suppose him brought to the conviction that Jesus Christ was a teacher sent from God:—the question is, what does this teacher reveal to him, according to the creed of Unitarianism, in addition to those "great truths on which human virtue and human happiness

depend?" the truths, namely, of what is commonly but ambiguously termed *natural religion.* Let the additions be stated, that we may ascertain their amount. There may be confirmation of truth already known; but of substantial truth itself, the acquisition, I apprehend, will be found superlatively scanty;—so scanty as, in this respect at least,—namely, the actual amount of truth embraced or truth abandoned,—to render the transition from deism to Unitarianism, or from Unitarianism to deism, a very slender change;—and infinitely too scanty, surely, to be the sum total of what divine revelation has actually discovered. I am aware that all Unitarians do not hold the same sentiments respecting communion with unbelievers, with those avowed in the above-mentioned Sermon. But how has such a question ever come to be discussed? When the *faith of the gospel* on the one hand, and the *entire rejection of revelation* on the other, are regarded (as on every principle of common sense they ought to be), as perfect antipodes to each other, the idea of such communion never enters the mind, any more than that of bringing the poles together:—and the bare fact of its having become a matter of grave and serious inquiry, whether deists should or should not be received to Unitarian communion, is itself (as before hinted) a conclusive proof that there is some feeling of kindred, some approximation of principle, some mutual recognition of common ground. The preacher might, in this way, perhaps, feel himself comfortably released from the apostle's prohibition, that prohibition being directed only against a "yoking" that is "*unequal,*"—which the yoking of Unitarianism and deism might not be felt to be. But, seriously, I

would put it to the common sense of every considerate Unitarian, whether it be at all probable, that a revelation which the God of heaven has been (if I may so express myself) at so much pains to communicate, should, after all, have in it so very little that is peculiar to itself; that, in the amount of actual discovery, it should go so very short a way beyond the Volume of Nature? Is it not, *a priori*, much more reasonable to expect, that the leading communications of such a revelation should unite the two attributes of pre-eminent importance and exclusive appropriateness? should be such as men *could not do without*, and *could not otherwise obtain?*—Unitarians were greatly offended when their system was denominated the *half-way-house* between true Christianity and deism;—we must now be pardoned, if, not from our conviction only, but upon their own showing, we place it a good many stages nearer to the end of the journey.

Were it not that I am aware how much most readers dislike long prefaces, and that the present has already exceeded all due bounds, I should have said a little on the *rationalism* or *neology* of the Continent, as affording additional and striking illustrations of the tendency of the system, and its close affinity to deism:—for, although English Unitarianism and German neology may not be identically the same, yet in some of their leading features of character, and principles of criticism, and modes of interpretation, there is such a coincidence between them as would fairly warrant inferences, especially with regard to tendency, from the one to the other. —But I must forbear.

Before concluding, however, I embrace the opportunity of

strongly expressing my obligations to an eminent writer of our own country, who combines, in no ordinary degree, accurate and extensive scholarship, and critical acumen, with the courtesy of the gentleman, the meekness of the Christian, and a measure of candour, of which the fault, if it be chargeable with any, is one whose extreme rarity might entitle it to a place in a museum of character,—I mean that of excess. The work of my highly valued friend Dr. JOHN PYE SMITH, entitled, The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, is a treasure of admirable Biblical Criticism. The Reader will find that I have made occasional use of it, particularly in the Notes, both in confirmation of my own sentiments, and to throw new light on some parts of the subject.—In a Note at the close of the Discourse on the nature and necessity of the Atonement, I have referred to a Discourse of the same Author on the Sacrifice of Christ. That reference was made, before I was aware of the Discourse having been recently re-published, with three additional ones on kindred subjects, or branches of the same subject,—the *priesthood of Christ*, the *Atonement made by Christ*, and the *redemption effected by Christ*, —forming, with notes and illustrations, a respectable octavo volume, distinguished by the same critical ability and the same Christian spirit.

In consequence of the publication of a pamphlet, by the Rev. W. H. Drummond, D. D. one of the Ministers of the Strand Street congregation, Dublin, entitled "The doctrine "of the Trinity founded neither on Scripture nor on Reason "and common Sense, but on tradition and the infallible "church;" a new champion for the truth has just appeared on

the Arena of authorship, namely, the Rev. James Carlile, one of the Ministers of the Scots Church, Mary's Abbey, Dublin, in a work entitled "JESUS CHRIST OUR GOD AND SAVIOUR," of which I have not yet finished the perusal, but which, from what I have read, appears to be the production of an acute, ardent, and vigorous mind,—ably reasoned, and forcibly written.

In the present Edition of this Work, I have placed first in order the Discourse "on the Test of Truth in matters of "Religion," which was formerly fourth in the series, being satisfied, agreeably to an early suggestion of the Eclectic Reviewer, notwithstanding the circumstances that induced me to postpone it in the delivery, that this is its most natural position.—The enlargements, before alluded to, including an extension of the size of the page, will amount in all to about 150 pages, of which a considerable proportion are in the small type of the notes.—Several of the notes of the former Editions have been omitted, as being rather of temporary interest; and a number of new ones have been added.—A more copious Table of Contents is prefixed, and an Index of Scripture Texts subjoined.

I have had abundant cause for devout and lively gratitude to the God of all grace, in the evidences afforded, from time to time, that the publication of these Discourses has not been in vain. I commend them anew to His blessing, in the humble remembrance that "neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God, who giveth the increase." R. W.

Glasgow, May 28th, 1828.

ERRATA.

PARTLY in consequence of changing the arrangement of the Notes, and partly from the mistake of one letter for another, a somewhat awkward confusion has arisen in the references at the bottom of the page to those from E. to K. inclusive. Instead of E, F, G, H, I, K, they stand D, C, D, E, p, F.—At the head of the Notes themselves, however, both the erroneous and the proper mark are put, and the page referred; by which any perplexity to the reader will be sufficiently prevented.

From the extreme smallness of the Greek letter, two or three slight *literal* inaccuracies may be detected; but they are not worthy of specification, as no one that knows the language can be at all at a loss with them.

Page 520, line 19, for *preposition*, read *proposition*.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE TEST OF TRUTH IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

1 Thess. v. 21.

"*Prove all things :—hold fast that which is good.*"

In entering upon any argumentative discussion, nothing is of more essential consequence than to ascertain, with precision, not only the points in dispute, but the legitimate sources of evidence,—or the authority to which the disputants mutually agree to make their appeal, and by which, according to such agreement, the controversy is to be settled. If the subject of question be, what the doctrines are which are taught in a particular record, the reference, it is obvious, must be made to the record itself; and the sole inquiries must be, What did the author write? and, What is the meaning of his language? But if the question be, Are the doctrines of that record worthy of credit?—a question which supposes them ascertained,—the case is entirely altered. The appeal is not now to the record itself; but to those sources of evidence that are appropriate to the matters of which it treats, and by which the doctrines maintained in it may be either disproved or established. The two questions, What is Newton's philosophy? and, Is Newton's philosophy true?—are entirely distinct, and must be answered in different ways; the one by an examination of Newton's writings, the other by an investigation of the works of God.

There is one obvious exception to these remarks. They relate to *human* records. Supposing any record once ascer-

tained to be *divine*, there can no longer be two questions. There can be one only. We have then to do solely with the meaning. The ascertained divinity of the record settles the question of truth. To ask, respecting any thing which such a record testifies, Is it true? would involve the blasphemous presumption of questioning the veracity of God.—These are very simple principles; and their application is equally simple to the important discussions on which we are about to enter;—discussions respecting the great articles of the Christian faith.

The text which I have read contains a most important precept; or rather two precepts, closely connected with each other. "Prove all things:—hold fast that which is good."

The command to "prove all things," ought to be applied both to *doctrines* and to *duties*:—we are to "hold fast," or to maintain with stedfastness, what we have first ascertained to be "good;"—what is *true* in doctrine; what is *right* in conduct.

But the injunction to "prove all things," supposes some fixed standard by which all things are to be tried; and the proper meaning of the injunction is,—BRING ALL THINGS TO THE TEST."*

What, then, *is* the test to which all things are to be brought?—Is it REASON?—or is it REVELATION?

On the supposition of our having a revelation from God, there can be but one answer, surely, to this question, amongst all who "think soberly."—The test, without controversy, must be, *not Reason*, but *Revelation*. To affirm the contrary, would be to exalt reason, in the certainty of its decisions, above Divine authority, and the claims of Natural Religion above those of the Word of God.

* Παντα δοκιμαζετε.

What, then, on such subjects, is the proper province of Reason?—To this inquiry there is no need for any tedious and elaborate answer. The case is a very simple one.—There are two points which we not only may with propriety, but ought in duty, to employ our reason to determine. The first is, Whether the Scriptures *be* a revelation from God:—and when this has been satisfactorily settled, the second is, What is the true meaning of the various parts of this revelation?—what does it contain?—what does it really teach us to believe, and to do?—Reason, then, is not the test itself:—it is only the instrument by which we *ascertain* the test, and by which we *apply* it to use. If this be to renounce the free exercise of our reason, we plead guilty. But to assign to reason any higher place, on subjects of this nature, we cannot but reckon most irrational and inconsistent, as well as, in the highest degree, arrogant and presumptuous. The testimony of the God of truth must be taken in whole, or rejected in whole. What *He* expressly dictates it must be impious for Reason to dispute.

Agreement with regard to the test to which disputed doctrines are to be brought, is obviously, as already noticed, of the very last importance. It is, indeed, quite essential. There can be no satisfactory reasoning without it; for without it there is no arriving at any conclusion.

On this subject, then, it is a question of great magnitude, "*Is* this volume, which we call the Holy Scriptures, given by inspiration of God? *Is* it a Divine revelation?"—There is an obvious and important difference between this question, and the question, Whether these Scriptures *contain* such a revelation? I must be allowed to proceed on the assumption, that not only the latter, but the former also of these questions, is rightly answered in the affirmative;—that is, on the assumption of what is usually termed the *plenary inspiration*

of the sacred volume. I take it for granted, not only that they *contain truth*, but that *all* which they contain *is truth*.

I do not feel myself called upon at present to enter into any proof of the genuineness, the authenticity, and the inspiration, of the various writings contained in the Bible. This is a distinct subject; and it has been often and ably handled. The evidence of the canonical authority of some of these writings is, it is true, greater than that of others. But as to all and each of them, I hold it to be *sufficient*.—The great majority of the books of the *New Testament* were received into the canon, without dispute, from the beginning. These were denominated *undisputed books*.* A few, namely, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the book of Revelation, were questioned by some in early times, although they were generally received; and obtained, of course, in distinction from the others, the appellation of *disputed books*.† The evidence, however, of the authenticity and genuineness of these books is abundantly sufficient to justify their admission into the canon. And it has been frequently, and with great justice, observed, that the very circumstance of *a few* having been thus questioned, is a strong proof of the validity of the claims of *all*; because it clearly evinces, that they were received, not with inconsiderate rashness, but with strict and jealous investigation.

I must likewise be allowed to take for granted the *inspiration* of the Scripture writings, as well as their genuineness and authenticity:—to consider *the whole* of these writings as having the stamp of *Divine authority*;—as containing *truth*,—*the whole truth* which God has thought fit to com-

* ὁμολογούμενα. † ἀντιλεγόμενα.

municate,—and *nothing but truth.* This, is indispensably necessary to the Scriptures being a proper *Test* either of doctrines or of actions. A test, or standard, must, it is very obvious, be something that is itself fixed;—and to which we can make our appeal, in all cases, with confidence and security.—That by which we are to "*prove all things,*" must surely be something which is *itself already proved.*

It is extremely difficult to maintain a process of scriptural reasoning with the adversaries of the Divinity and atonement of Christ; because the notions which in general they entertain respecting the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures are so very vague and undefined.—Of this I must lay before you two or three instances.

"The Scriptures," says one of their most eminent writers, "were written without any particular inspiration, by men "who wrote according to the best of their knowledge, and "who, from their circumstances, could not be mistaken, "with regard to the *greater facts* of which they were pro- "perly *witnesses;* but (like other men subject to prejudice) "might be liable to adopt a hasty and ill-grounded opinion "concerning things which did not fall within the compass "of their own knowledge, and which had no connexion "with any thing that was so.—We ought all of us, therefore, "to consider ourselves fully at liberty, to examine, with the "greatest rigour, both the reasonings of the writers, and the "facts of which we find any account in their writings; that "judging by the rules of just criticism, we may distinguish "what may be depended on from what may not." *—I like the honesty of this avowal:—but I presume you will agree with me in thinking, that *Deism* ought to have been the profession of him who makes it. Every one must at once

* Priestley's History of Early Opinions, Vol. IV. p. 5.

perceive, that, according to this view of the Scriptures, they cannot be a *test* by which *all things are to be proved;* for instead of possessing any fixed character and decisive authority, there is nothing certain in them. In bringing all things to *them* as a test, we may be rejecting important truth, and storing our minds with mistakes as to facts, and with hasty and ill-grounded opinions, the result of ignorance and prejudice. They are *themselves,* it seems, to be *proved* by a standard of superior authority. For what is there, in the preceding quotation, respecting the Holy Scriptures, which might not be said, in the same terms, and with the same truth, with regard to the writings either of the author himself by whom their authority is thus unsettled, or of any other human author whatever?—Are you prepared, then, my friends, to consider those Scriptures, to which you have been accustomed to make your appeal, as to an inspired standard, and "the only infallible rule of faith and manners,"—as the productions of fallible men, and partaking throughout of the fallibility of their authors? If not, you are not prepared to follow this guide, who expresses, in the sentences I have just quoted, his deliberate opinion; an opinion frequently, and in similar terms, repeated in his writings.

Although all the writers of this class may not express themselves with the same decidedness, and reject, in terms equally unqualified, the inspiration of the sacred volume, yet are they very generally characterized by a similar laxity of principle on this important point.—"The Scriptures," says another of their leading authors, (and his words strikingly illustrate the distinction, made a little ago, between the Bible *being* a revelation of God's will, and only *containing* such a revelation)—"The Scriptures contain a faithful and "credible account of the *Christian doctrine,* which is the *true* "*word of God:* but they are not *themselves* the word of

" God, nor do they ever assume that title: and it is highly " improper to speak of them as such; as it leads inattentive " readers to suppose they were written under a plenary " inspiration, to which they make no pretension; and as " such expressions expose Christianity unnecessarily, to the " cavils of unbelievers." *—The same writer, in giving a statement of the Unitarian creed on this and other subjects, says:—" The Unitarians maintain, that Jesus and his " apostles were supernaturally instructed, as far as was " necessary for the execution of their commission, that is, " for the revelation and proof of the doctrine of eternal life, " and that the favour of God extended to the Gentiles " equally with the Jews; and that Jesus, and his apostles, " and others of the primitive believers, were occasionally " inspired to foretell future events. But they believe that " supernatural inspiration was limited to these cases alone, " and that when Jesus or his apostles deliver opinions upon " subjects unconnected with the object of their mission, " such opinions, and their reasonings upon them, are to be " received with the same attention and caution, with those " of other persons in similar circumstances, of similar " education, and with similar habits of thinking.—The " Unitarians admit, that the Scriptures of the Old and New " Testament, and especially the latter, contain authentic " records of facts, and of Divine interpositions; but they " utterly deny the universal inspiration of the writers of those " compositions, as a qualification to which indeed they make " no pretension, and of which they offer no proof: and the " assertion of which tends only to embarrass the evidences of " revelation, and to give advantage to its enemies." †

* Belsham's Review of Wilberforce, page 19.—The *Italics* in the preceding extracts, are not mine, but the Author's.

† Belsham's Calm Inquiry, pp. 451, 452.

One thing respecting most writers of this school, which cannot fail to strike every attentive reader of their works, is, the strong partiality which they uniformly manifest to the *Gospel Histories*, above the *Apostolic Epistles*.—Of the latter they shake themselves loose with very little ceremony indeed. The first of the writers to whom I have just referred, in speaking of the Arian opinion that the world was formed by Jesus Christ, as a subordinate agent to the Father, has these words;—"Now, as it is not pretended that there are any "miracles adapted to prove that Christ made and supports "the world, *I do not see that we are under any obligation to* "*believe it, merely because it was an opinion held by an* "*apostle.*" *—And again: "It is not certainly from a few "casual expressions, which so easily admit of other interpre- "tations, *and especially in Epistolary writings, which are* "*seldom composed with so much care, as books intended for the* "*use of posterity*, that we can be authorized to infer, that "such was the serious opinion of the apostles. But *if it had* "*been their real opinion, it would not follow that it was true,* "*unless the teaching of it should appear to be included in their* "*general commission.*" †—The other writer, speaking of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's operation on the minds of men, expresses himself thus:—"In popular language, the virtuous "affections of virtuous men are, with great propriety, "ascribed to God; and the pious writers of the Scriptures "have often adopted this form of expression. Whether "they themselves believed in the existence of frequent su- "pernatural impressions upon the mind, does not clearly "appear; and it is certain, that they nowhere affirm that it "constituted any part of their commission, to teach this "extraordinary and improbable doctrine." ‡

* Priestley's History of Early Opinions, p. 63. † Ib. p. 70.

‡ Belsham's Review of Wilberforce, p. 78.

This distinction between what the apostles taught, and what they were commissioned to teach;—between what they wrote, and what they were inspired to write; is the most convenient that can well be imagined. According to the sentiments just quoted, we are not bound to receive, as of Divine authority, any doctrine or precept, of any kind, delivered by the apostles, unless it be accompanied with a formal declaration, that it came within the extent of their commission:—nay more, unless this was ascertained at the time, as to each particular doctrine and precept, by a miracle or miracles specially adapted for its confirmation!—In this way, the epistles are fairly excluded from forming any part of the test of truth and of duty. If any thing in them is not exactly to our liking, we have only to make it out that it is no more than the private opinion of the writer, or a part of his reasonings and inferences; and that it did not come within the limits of his commission. And nothing in the world can be easier than this: because, on this principle, these limits are nowhere defined by the writers themselves, and may, consequently, be drawn by their readers as wide or as narrow as may suit their respective inclinations. And by those who hold the sentiments which I am now opposing, they are, in all conscience, drawn narrow enough.

From the views of inspiration which these writers entertain, we are prepared to hear, without surprise, (for it is mournfully consistent) one of them charging the sacred penmen with using language, even on the most important subjects, to which *they themselves probably annexed no very distinct ideas*, and another, with a liberty which cannot but shock every sober mind, accusing the author of the admirable and interesting epistle to the Hebrews, with "*far-fetched analogies, and inconclusive reasonings.*"

There are one or two passages in the writings of the apostle

Paul, (writings which, by the way, are ranked by Peter with "*the other Scriptures,*" and which are to be regarded by us as of the same authority) in which he has been understood by some to disclaim inspiration, on the particular subjects of which he is at the time speaking, and to deliver his own private judgment. I am fully satisfied that this opinion is founded in a mistake; and that this apostle in no one instance disclaims inspiration, or Divine authority, in what he teaches, or in what he enjoins. On the discussion of this question, however, it would be foreign to my present purpose to enter.* I only observe respecting it, that even if the common supposition, that he does in these instances disclaim inspiration, were well-founded, the inference which has usually been drawn from the circumstance appears a very fair and legitimate one, —that since we find him so cautiously and faithfully giving intimation, when, in any particular instance, it is *not the Lord* that speaks but *himself*, we ought to consider this as a virtual assurance, that in all other cases, in which no such intimation is given, it is *not himself* that speaks, but *the Lord.*

The writers of whom I now speak, who express themselves thus slightingly as to the apostolic epistles, are wont to insist on the gospels being quite sufficient,—nay, on any one of the gospels being by itself sufficient, for our complete instruction in the principles of the Christian faith.—"Each of the "gospels," says one of them, "was certainly intended to "be a sufficient instruction in the fundamental principles of "Christianity."†—I am by no means disposed to deny, that the fundamental principles of Christianity may be found in each of the evangelical histories. But if it was God's method, to complete the communication of his mind and will, in various successive portions; are we, I would ask, to consider

* See Note A. at the end of the volume.

† Priestley's History of Early Opinions, p. 16.

ourselves warranted to put asunder what he intended we should join together, and use as one whole?—The gospels, we should recollect, are *narratives of facts;* and as such, could go no further than the facts themselves admitted. If, therefore, it was not the purpose of God to give a complete development of Christian doctrine during the personal ministry of Christ, it is sufficiently obvious, from the very nature of the thing, that this complete development could not be contained either in one or in all of the gospel histories, of which the simple design is, to give an account of that ministry.—Our Lord himself said to his disciples, when he was about to take his leave of them, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now:"—and again; "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth;—he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*—Are we not taught by such expressions, that during his lifetime their instructions were not complete?—that at a future period they were to receive, by direct inspiration, a more full, even a perfect acquaintance with that doctrine, which it was to be the great business of their lives to communicate to mankind?—This is the clear import of his intimations and promises. And are not those who slight the Epistles, and speak of them as containing the opinions and reasonings of fallible men, guilty of contemning the precious results of this promised Divine illumination, and of rejecting the counsel of God, against themselves?—I earnestly wish my Unitarian friends (for such I desire to esteem them, as fellow men, although I cannot give them the right hand of fellowship as Christian brethren) to consider this with becoming seriousness, and to beware:—and it is my fervent

* John xvi. 12, 13, 14, 26.

prayer, that others may be preserved from that fatal delusion which it is my present object to expose;—that they may be saved from treating with unseemly levity the word of the most High God, and may continue to approach it, as they approach to its Divine Author himself, "with reverence and godly fear!"

This feeling of humble reverence will be associated, in proportion to the degree in which it exists, with self-diffident and ingenuous *candour*:—a disposition of mind absolutely indispensable to the right discharge of the duty enjoined in the text, of "*proving all things.*"—In bringing either sentiments or practices to the test of God's word, it should be our sincere desire to have our minds divested of all *prejudice*;—so that we may come to the Bible, not with a view to find confirmation of opinions which we have previously formed; but with humble and earnest solicitude after an answer to Pilate's question, "WHAT IS TRUTH?" If we come in any other temper of mind than this, we are sure to fail.

We, my brethren, are often and earnestly exhorted by our Unitarian opponents, to the laying aside of prejudice, and to the exercise of candid and unbiassed judgment. It is certainly our incumbent duty, to take all such admonitions in good part. But when it is modestly taken for granted, that all our sentiments, as to what we are accustomed to reckon the distinguishing and peculiar doctrines of the gospel, have their origin and their foundation in prejudice alone;—unfortunate and inveterate early prejudice:—nay, when we are told publicly, and from the press, "that *thinking "it unsafe to make faith the result of rational inquiry, we "determine to ground it in early prejudice*:"*—we have only to say, that such reflections are not the most likely way to

* Mr. Yates' Sermon on the Grounds of Unitarian Dissent, pp. 18, 19.

produce the candour, of which the absence is deplored. We presume to think, sensible though we be that we are liable to the influence of prejudice as well as others, that rather more than enough is here assumed;—and we reject the charge brought against us, as illiberal and unjust.

When, in connexion with lamentation over the unhappy power of prejudice, we are assured, with an air of imposing confidence, that we need only to lay this prejudice aside, to use our reason freely, to employ our understanding without apprehension;—in order to our immediately discerning our errors, and embracing the truth:—let us not forget, that "our hearts are deceitful above all things." I do not say, that such assurances are intended as flattery; but they are most certainly fitted to have the effect of flattery:—and there are few species of flattery more insinuating and dangerous, than that which suggests the independence of reason, and the sufficiency of unassisted intellect. Let us not forget ourselves. Let us not be bewitched into self-sufficient confidence. But let us still, with importunity and fervour, implore the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit of promise, while with humility, and reverence, and desire after the purity of truth, we "search the Scriptures."

I am no enemy to free inquiry. But I am for keeping Reason in its proper place; and for retaining on our minds a constant, deep, and humble sense of our own weakness and liableness to err. There is a daring and presumptuous rashness, sometimes characterized as *magnanimity*, and as "*noble intrepidity*"* in the pursuit of truth, which is neither the spirit of true Christianity, nor of sound philosophy; and against which every man will be on his guard, who is desirous "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think,

* Priestley's History of Early Opinions, Dedication, p. vi.

but to think soberly." It is highly gratifying to the self-complacent vanity of the human heart: but on this very account it is more deluding than the strongest prejudice. Nothing stands in the way of this high-minded, this fearless temerity. Its favourite maxim, under which it protects itself from reprobation, and imposes on the mind that is under its perilous influence, is, that "Truth must be followed, whithersoever it leads;"—must, without hesitation, be embraced, although it should be in opposition to all that has hitherto passed for truth in the world; the perfections, and even the very existence of the Divine Being himself not excepted.* Thus it is that evil sanctions and justifies itself, under the name and appearance of good. Thus it is that "Satan transforms himself into an angel of light."—That truth should be followed whithersoever it leads, is a maxim of which no one can dispute the soundness: and because it is thus indisputable, the pride of philosophical ambition assumes it as the motto of its banner, and, unappalled by what might alarm the timidity of vulgar minds, pursues, with lofty air, its wild and desolating career.—Just and important, however, as the general maxim is, it is neither less just, nor

* The following striking and affecting instance of the *sang froid* with which this spirit enables a man to suppose and to contemplate even the conclusion *that there is no God*, is taken from No. 4. of the Appendix to the Memoirs of Dr. Priestley, Vol. I. p. 423. Speaking of the doctrine of *equivocal*, or *spontaneous generation*, in certain species of plants and animals, as maintained by Dr. Darwin, and impugned by Dr. Priestley, the latter of whom considered it as a direct introduction to atheism, the writer, Mr. Thomas Cooper, President Judge of the fourth district of Pennsylvania,—says:—"I do not see the *certain* tendency of this opinion to atheism; for this property of spontaneous production may have been originally communicated under certain circumstances, as well as any of the other properties of organized or unorganized matter; and the one and the other may be equally necessary parts of the pre-established order of things. BUT IF IT DO LEAD TO ATHEISM, WHAT THEN? There can be no crime in following truth wherever it leads; and I think we have sufficient reason to believe, that the result of truth must be more beneficial to mankind than error."

less important, that in proportion to the magnitude of the subject, and to the nature and extent of the consequences, ought to be our certainty *that it is indeed truth* which we adopt and maintain.

There are many prejudices besides that which exists in favour of what is old and long-established. In not a few minds, the predilection is strong in behalf of whatever is *new*;—while in others there is an irresistible desire after something that is *singular* and *original*; something which they can appropriate, and call *their own*. Some adhere pertinaciously to error, because a change of sentiment would affect their character for *steadiness*: others inconsiderately embrace it, misled by the secret desire of a reputation for *candour*; a reputation bestowed of course, and often with lavish flattery, amongst the party whose sentiments they are induced to espouse.

I am aware, that, according to strict etymological import, a *prejudice* should be considered as a judgment, or opinion, previously formed, by its attachment to which the mind is biassed in its inquiries after truth. But I use the word in a somewhat looser sense, as including those *predispositions*, as well as *previous judgments*, by which the mind is in danger of being thus injuriously influenced. In this view, there is a class of prejudices, of still more powerful operation than any of those I have mentioned: I mean those *moral prejudices*, by which the heart is prepossessed against the doctrines of the gospel. There is a prejudice, deeply rooted in the breast, against whatever is, in any way, humbling to human pride; —a prejudice against whatever is mortifying to inward corruption, in any one of its various branches. These, and such as these, are the prejudices, by which the reception of gospel truth into the mind is most vigorously and successfully opposed.—But of these I may have occasion to take more particular notice at a future opportunity.

From prejudice, of every description, it ought, as I have said, to be our most earnest prayer that we may be delivered, in our investigation of the Scriptures of truth;—that we may search them, not with a proud and refractory, but with an humble and teachable disposition; looking for direction and illumination to Him who hath said, that "*the meek* he will guide in judgment, that *to the meek* he will teach his way." It is thus only, that we can "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Let the following brief remarks, then, sum up what I have to say, on the important duty inculcated in the text, of "*proving all things.*"

1*st*, The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, are the TEST by which "*all things*" are to be "*proved.*"

In the discourses which, with the divine permission, are to follow, it is my purpose to confine myself exclusively to this standard. I have nothing to do either with traditions, or with the Fathers. I address myself to Protestants; and my appeal, therefore, is not to the authority of the CHURCH, but to the authority of the WORD; and of that word I assume the Protestant canon as settled.—With regard to the Fathers, they have been treated by some with an extravagance of veneration, and by others with an extreme of neglect. Whatever may be the measure of deference to which they are entitled, it will be admitted that *authority* they have none. They differ from one another; and some of them, as quoted sometimes by the abettors of opposite opinions, appear at least to differ occasionally from themselves. And it has often been matter of surprise to me, that divines of the English Church, after having produced, in support of the views which they advocate, the authority of the inspired penmen, should discover so much solicitude about the corroborative testimony of the Fathers. We have the word of God in

our hands as well as they, with the addition of all the lights of Biblical criticism with which more modern research has furnished us; we have judgments of our own which we are bound to exercise in the discovery of truth; and we have the same encouraging promises of divine assistance in our inquiries. To betake ourselves to the Fathers, after having made good our points from the Sacred Volume, is to seek a taper, to help the light of the sun.

2*dly*, The Holy Scriptures must be received as *an inspired whole*:—because if we are to take them only partially, without previously fixing what portion of them is to be held as inspired, and what not, we are as completely destitute of any certain test of religious truth, as if we had no revelation at all. And far more, it is evident, must this be the case, if, while the Scriptures are acknowledged to contain truth from God, their proper inspiration is, notwithstanding, *entirely denied*: for in that case, whatever degree of deference we may think reasonably due to them, yet as the productions of fallible men, *no part of them whatever* can be an infallible criterion.—You have heard how loose and vague are the sentiments of our opponents, respecting these important points;—points which immediately regard the very ground on which all controversy, on such subjects as those proposed for discussion, must of necessity be conducted;—there being no other accessible source of information.

3*dly*, In making our appeal to the Scriptures, we should beware on all occasions, of secretly indulging *a wish* to discover any part of them, however small, to be spurious. From a lowly sense of the deceitfulness of our hearts, and on account of the degree in which such a wish is in danger of biassing and perverting our judgments, we should be the more especially jealous of ourselves, in those instances, in which the particular passages in question contain, or seem to

contain, any thing that is inconsistent with the opinions which we may previously have formed:—and no word, or text, or passage, should be pronounced an interpolation, without the clearest *critical evidence* of its having formed no part of the original record, as dictated by the Spirit of God. The truth is, such words, and texts, and passages, are so very few in number, and in every respect of such a nature, that the unlearned reader of the English translation need not be under the slightest apprehension of being led, from *this* cause, into any erroneous sentiment:—for I question if there be any one sentiment, or principle, contained in the Scriptures of which the truth depends on a solitary text.

On this part of my subject, what is to be said for the candour of our opponents, in rejecting, as they do, from the canon of Scripture, the first two chapters, (except the introduction) of the gospel by Luke, and the first two (except the genealogy of our Lord) of the gospel by Matthew?—There can hardly be conceived, (I put it seriously to their own consciences) a more shameless violation of all the established rules of sacred criticism, than their conduct as to these portions of Scripture exhibits.—For, on what authority do they proceed in their rejection of them? Not, as they themselves admit, on the authority of any versions or manuscripts: for the passages are found in all the manuscripts and versions that have yet been discovered. But the gospel of Matthew used by the sect of the *Ebionites*, wanted, it seems, according to the testimony of two of the ancient Fathers,* the first two chapters; and the first two chapters of

* Epiphanius and Jerome. Even this, however, has been shown to be unfounded. Dr. Laurence, in his "critical reflections on some important misrepresentations contained in the Unitarian Version of the New Testament," (a work which will well repay the trouble of a careful perusal) has shown, by re-

Luke's gospel were wanting in the copy of that gospel used by Marcion, a heretic of the second century.—What, then, is the nature and amount of this authority? It is, *in the first place*, as already noticed, an authority directly opposed to that of all versions and manuscripts, without a single exception, that have yet been discovered. —It is, therefore, 2*dly*, an authority, the admission of which, in these circumstances, is a flagrant departure from the canons of Biblical criticism laid down, as the result of long experience, by the most eminent critics, and recognised, and sanctioned, and professedly adhered to, by our opponents themselves.†—But it is also, 3*dly*, an authority, even with regard to the passages in question, in itself inconsistent and contradictory. The Ebionites, they admit, on the authority of one of the ancient Fathers before alluded to,‡ *mutilated* the copy which they used of the gospel according to Matthew, by *taking away the genealogy*: they therefore think proper to *retain* the genealogy. And yet, on the sole authority of these same acknowledged *mutilators*, they reject the remainder of the first two chapters. Marcion, in like manner, rejected, according to their own statement, the *whole* of the first two chapters of the gospel by Luke; and yet, in *opposition* to that authority, and without assigning a reason, they *retain* the introductory verses to Luke's gospel, while, in *compliance* with it, they *repudiate* all that remains of these chapters.—4*thly*, It is an

ference to preceding critics, and by quotations adduced by himself, that the latter of these Fathers, instead of asserting the absence of the first two chapters of the Hebrew gospel, used by the Ebionites, has asserted the very reverse:—and that the former, instead of considering that gospel as "the original gospel of Matthew written in the Hebrew language for the use of the Jewish believers," pointedly stigmatized it, as an imperfect, spurious, and mutilated copy. See the work of Dr. Laurence referred to, pp. 24, 25, 41—44; and pp. 19—21.

† See Introduction to the Improved Version of the New Testament.

‡ Epiphanius.

authority, which, if consistently followed, (and why it should be followed in this instance, and not in others, no good reason can be assigned) would lead to the immediate rejection of *the whole of the Old Testament*, and at least *almost the whole of the New*. For by the same authority on which the Editors of the Improved Version of the New Testament, and Unitarians in general, build, respecting the omissions in question, we are informed, that the *Ebionite* canon of the New Testament rejected the last three gospels, and all the epistles of Paul: and as to *Marcion*, that he rejected the Old Testament, and every part of the New which contained quotations from the Old; and that the only gospel he used was that of Luke, from which too, he expunged whatever he did not approve.

Such is the authority, which, in defiance of all Versions, and of all Manuscripts, as well as of all the critics, and amongst the rest Griesbach himself, who not only admits the passages in question, but never gives the slightest hint of their ever having been doubted;—such is the authority which is brought forward to set aside these portions of the sacred volume! And such being the nature of the authority, is it possible to avoid a suspicion—is it a breach of charity to entertain it—that there must have been in the minds of those who reject these chapters, a secret *wish to find them spurious?*—a predisposition to lend a willing ear to whatever could be adduced, with even the remotest semblance of plausibility, to bring them into discredit?—They contain, you all know, accounts of the incarnation of our Saviour, which cannot be made to comport with the Unitarian creed: and this seems to afford the only key to the mystery (for when this is left out of view it really *is* a mystery) of their being rejected as interpolations, or even branded as doubtful, on such authority. They are, on universally acknowledged

principles, *critically right;* but they are, unhappily, *doctrinally wrong.**

4*thly*, When we examine any word, or text, or passage, our sole desire should be, to discover, not the sense which it *may bear*, or which we may imagine it *ought to bear;* but the sense in which it was originally used by the writer himself;—the sentiment or sentiments which the Holy Spirit designed to convey by it.—This is obviously the one simple point to which all our investigations of the Divine Word ought to be directed. The principle should be applied to every sentence of the Record. It should not even be reckoned enough by us, that the sense we attach to any passage be truth. There is another question; whether it be the truth which, in that particular place, the Divine Author of the Scriptures meant to express. This, and nothing else, and nothing more, it should be our desire to discover for ourselves, and to communicate to others. And, generally speaking, it may be assumed as a maxim,—the Bible being designed, not for the learned critic only, but for the illiterate and the poor,—that the meaning which is the most plain and obvious is most

* The reader, who wishes to see the subject of the authenticity of these portions of Matthew's and Luke's Gospels, fully and ably discussed, will find ample satisfaction in the second and third chapters of Dr. Laurence's work, before referred to;—in Mr. Nares' Remarks on the Improved Version, pp. 4—33;—and in the Appendix to the 3d edition of Dr. Magee's Work on Atonement and Sacrifice, Vol. II. pp. 451—481, Notes.—Dr. Laurence concludes his Dissertation on both these passages, with the following words:—"Upon the "whole, then, taking a retrospective view of what has been advanced on both "topics, will Unitarian candour act unworthy of itself, if, instead of rejecting "any part of St. Matthew's Gospel upon the credit of the Ebionites, or any part "of St. Luke's Gospel upon the credit of the Marcionites, it be disposed to give a "due weight to the text, the authority of which no biblical critic of eminence "has ever yet attempted to shake; if it put the concurrent testimony of an-"tiquity, supported by the accurate collation of Manuscripts, Fathers, and Ver-"sions, into one scale, and, throwing the spurious Gospel of Ebion, and the "more spurious Gospel of Marcion into the other, behold them ignominiously "kick the beam."

likely to be the true one. To the violation of this reasonable maxim, we are all, at times, under strong temptations. How far it is adhered to by our opponents, I must leave it to yourselves to judge, from their interpretations of the various texts, which may be adduced and illustrated in subsequent Discourses.

5thly, To the dictates of the inspired volume, our minds should be prepared humbly and implicitly to bow:—whatever it plainly declares, we must without gainsaying receive.—The reasonableness of this it is surely superfluous, by any laboured argument, to prove. Without it, it is obvious, our appeal to the Bible, as a standard and test of truth, is utterly hypocritical and vain. We have not given the Bible its proper place of authority in our minds, unless we thus resign them to its dictation. It must have the same place with God. Its decisions must be final. And that man can have no right impression of the *divinity* of the Record, who can feel as if he were degraded and mortified by implicit faith, when the authority to which he is called to bow is that of the Infinite Mind.—As an illustration of what I mean, I shall present you with a specimen of the opposite temper of mind to the one recommended.—On the text, John vi. 62. "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?"—a celebrated Unitarian writer, more than once referred to in this Discourse, thus expresses himself:—"Though not satisfied with any interpretation that has "been given of this extraordinary passage, yet rather than "believe our Saviour to have existed in any other state before "the creation of the world, or to have left some state of "great dignity and happiness when he came hither, I would "have recourse to the old and exploded Socinian idea of "Christ's actual ascent into heaven, or of his imagining that "he had been carried up thither in a vision, which, like

"that of St. Paul, he had not been able to distinguish from "a reality:—nay, I would not build an article of faith of "such magnitude on the correctness of John's recollection "and representation of our Lord's language:—and so "strange and incredible does the hypothesis of a pre-existent "state appear, that, sooner than admit it, I would suppose "the whole verse to be an interpolation; or that the old "apostle dictated one thing, and his amanuensis wrote "another."*—This, you will admit, is abundantly bold, and abundantly honest: and were I to use the severest terms of reprehension, in animadverting on such language, I think I might escape without subjecting myself to very heavy censure. My only remark shall be, that when a man has got thus far, openly avowing his determination to believe any thing, however monstrous, rather than the plain and obvious meaning of the words of scripture, we must of necessity have done with him. Reasoning comes at once to an end. We have no common standard of appeal with him. We have nothing to bind his conscience, nothing to convince his judgment.

6*thly*, My last observation is, that we ought to beware of forming our judgment from detached and insulated passages of the word of God:—that we should take the Scriptures in their harmony, comparing one part with another, and using them, as much as possible, as *self-expositors*.—This is a principle, or canon of exposition, of the very highest importance. It requires no more for the Scriptures than every writer feels to be fair and reasonable for himself.—To furnish you with an exemplification of its importance, I must be allowed, for a few moments, to anticipate a subject which will come largely before us hereafter—the scripture doctrine concerning the person of Christ.—There are passages, as I shall endeavour

* Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, pp. 57, 58, &c. as quoted by Dr. Magee, Vol. I. pp. 87, 88.

to show you, which speak of him as God, ascribing to him the peculiar titles, attributes, works, and worship of Deity. There are other passages in which he is spoken of as man, and as acting a part in subordination to the Father. The question, then, in such a case, ought certainly to be, Does the divine record itself furnish us with any principle by which these apparently inconsistent views of his person may be harmonised? We are satisfied that it does;—that the Scriptures teach the union of the divine and human natures in the person of the Redeemer, and his voluntary assumption of the relation of a Servant to the Father, (or, if you will, to the Godhead,) in the work of redemption. We do not adopt this as a mere hypothesis; casting about in our minds to invent something that will solve a difficulty; trying a succession of gratuitous suppositions; forging a variety of keys, till we chance to hit upon one that fits the lock. We regard it as a plainly revealed doctrine of the word of God. And we feel our conviction of this established by the fact that it does produce a perfect, and, with very slight exceptions, an easy agreement amongst the seeming contrarieties adverted to. We lay it down as a fair principle, applicable not to this only but to all similar topics: *that of two contending systems, that one ought to be preferred, which not only affords a natural explanation of those texts by which it seems to be itself supported, but at the same time furnishes a satisfactory principle of harmony between these and those other passages which have the appearance of countenancing its opposite.*

To exemplify what I mean.—"Christ," says a Unitarian writer, "always prayed to this one God, as his God and "Father. He always spoke of himself as receiving his "doctrine and his power from him; and again and again "disclaimed having any power of his own. 'Then answered "Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,

"the Son can do nothing of himself,' John v. 19. 'The "words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the "Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works,' John xiv. "10. 'Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to "my Father and your Father, to my God and your God,' "John xx. 17. *It cannot surely be God,*" adds he, "*that uses "such language as this.*"*—Now, without making any particular comment on the language which this writer uses, might I not, on the other side, remind you, that this same Jesus says—"I and my Father are one:"—"Verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am?"—"I am in the Father and the Father in me; and he that hath seen me hath seen the Father:" —"No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven." "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work:"—"I will, be —thou clean:"—"I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts; and I will give to every one of you according to your works:"—and then say, with at least equal confidence, "*It cannot surely be a mere man, who uses such language as this?*"—and, might I not add all the other passages, in which the titles, attributes, works, and worship of Deity are ascribed to him, and repeat, It cannot be a mere man *of whom such things are said!*—Here, then, is the question brought into short compass. It comes at once to an issue. Here are two classes of passages, both contained in the same book,—both claiming to have their testimony received, as of the same authority.—Here are two bands of witnesses. They all seem to speak in language plain and distinctly intelligible. But they appear to contradict one another.—What, then, shall we make of them?—Whether are we to receive the testimony of the one, or that of the other?—Or must we reject that of

* Priestley's Hist. of Early Opinions, vol. i. p. 10.

both?—Or shall we apply scourges, and racks, and screws, and all the instruments of torture, to force from the one, or from the other, a declaration, that they did not at all intend to express what their language seems, beyond all doubt, to convey?—Or, lastly, is there no principle of reconciliation and harmony between their apparently discordant testimonies? Is there no ground on which both may consistently be believed; since both appear to be supported by the very same measure of credible evidence?—Here is the question;—here, I apprehend, the one great point on which the whole controversy respecting the Divinity of Christ turns. And in answer to the question we affirm, There *is* such a principle—there *is* such a ground—and besides it there is *no other*. It is to be found, in the double view which is given by the apostle Paul, of the person and official character of Jesus, when he says respecting him, that "being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Admit the double view of the person of Christ which is here stated,—make the supposition that the view which Trinitarians in general take of the passage is the true one,—and the difficulty vanishes. The testimony of the different witnesses, elicited without torture, and interpreted without perversion, becomes *one testimony*.—In plain terms, there is, on *this* principle hardly a single text that occasions any difficulty to an attentive and ingenuous reader.—On every consideration, then, of fairness and candour, is not this the view which ought to be preferred, by all who are desirous rightly to obey the injunction in the text, "PROVE ALL THINGS?"

I must now draw to a close.—Your time will not admit of my urging upon my fellow-Christians, at any length, by the various and powerful motives which might be presented to their minds, the important duty of "*holding fast that which is good.*"

All truth is good. The truth revealed in "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," is peculiarly good:—good in its own nature;—good in its holy and happy influence;—good in all its present, and in all its eternal consequences.—Let me exhort you, my brethren, to hold it fast *purely, firmly, meekly, practically.—Purely;* without any admixture of error:—*firmly;* not "halting between two opinions," fluctuating and undecided, or imagining that truth and error may be embraced and held with equal safety:—*meekly;* maintaining it with an humble consciousness of your own natural blindness, and a feeling of your entire obligation to the enlightening Spirit of God;—with benevolent affection to the persons of your opponents; and with the patience and gentleness of Christ:—*practically;* exemplifying, in the whole of your conduct, personal and social, private and public, in the family, in the church, and in the world, its renewing, and purifying and gladdening efficacy.

To *all*, I would say, and say with the earnestness of affectionate entreaty, "Search the Scriptures." Examine them for yourselves. Examine them with a seriousness becoming the importance of the inquiry, and the magnitude of those consequences that are necessarily connected with it. Derive no foolish and vain excuse for neglecting to do this, from those differences of sentiment which you may observe to subsist amongst the professed followers of Jesus Christ. The sentiments of others are nothing to you. It is not of *others*, but of *yourselves*, that you must give an account to God. Let each individual, therefore, attend to the gospel, as if he were

himself the only creature to whom it is addressed. O! beware of satisfying yourselves at present, with such excuses as, you must be conscious, will never bear the scrutiny of the great day. Your immortal souls are at stake. Be therefore, in earnest. Take nothing upon trust. What you hear from us, or from others, examine by the light of the Divine word. If we speak not according to that word, there is no light in us. It is not what *we* say, but what *God* says, that is "able to save the soul."—"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;—then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."*—May God thus incline your hearts to "PROVE ALL THINGS, AND TO HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

* Prov. ii. 1—5.

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE UNITY OF GOD, AND THE TRINITY OF PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD.

DEUT. vi. 4.

" Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is one Lord."

DEISTS have often contemptuously smiled, at the diversity of sentiment which exists amongst professed believers in revelation. It is no part of my present purpose, to examine into the causes of this diversity. It ought not, however, to be unnoticed, that amongst Deists themselves, the differences, in proportion to the extent of their creed, and the nature and number of the topics which it embraces, are neither fewer, nor less considerable. No two of them seem to be agreed, as to what are, strictly speaking, the articles of faith, in the System of *Natural Religion.* There are few phrases, indeed, of which the proper import is more undefined.

Various circumstances may be considered as contributing to account for this important and curious fact.

In the first place: In a country where Divine revelation is possessed, and where its truths are in general currency, there will always be found, amongst those who reject its authority, a great deal of unacknowledged obligation to it. Truths are brought forward by persons of this description, as the result of their own unassisted investigation, which, without the aid of revelation, were never discovered by philosophers of the most sagacious and comprehensive minds; and for the knowledge of which, they are, in reality, indebted to that very revelation which they disbelieve and contemn. They thus

borrow from the armory of God the very weapons with which they oppose his cause. They pilfer fire from the altar of Jehovah, to burn the sacrifice at the shrine of their own wisdom. They abstract the coin of Heaven, and proudly stamp it with the image and superscription of Reason.—The variety of degrees in which this kind of secret sacrilege is practised, contributes, of course, to the diversity of sentiment amongst the professed opposers of revelation, respecting the true extent of the natural powers of discovery, on such subjects, possessed by the human mind.

2*dly.* Another consideration, conducing to the same effect, is, that in the speculations and reasonings of such men, *theory* is resorted to more than *fact.* Now to the variety of theoretical speculation there are hardly any assignable limits.—But surely men who, on such a subject as that before us, are content to deal in theory, are miserably inconsistent with themselves. In science and philosophy, they are accustomed to insist on facts, and on experimental induction, as the only basis on which theory should rest. Yet here, although facts without number present themselves, in the history of every age and of every nation in which revelation has been unknown, theory is still pertinaciously adhered to: and human reason has been most ingeniously and plausibly shown to be eminently capable of effecting, what in fact it has never done. The truth is, that of the air-built speculations of such philosophers the whole fabric is at once overthrown, by a single glance into the state and history of the heathen world. It is a case determined by an extent of practical evidence, such as hardly ever bore on any other question. One great experiment was made for the long space of *four thousand years*, during which the world in general was left to itself, with full opportunity to try its powers. The experiment was on a large scale; it was tried with every possible variety of circumstances; and

the unvarying and undeniable result was, that "*the world by wisdom knew not God.*"*

3*dly.* An important distinction, although in itself very obvious, has, on this subject, been frequently overlooked: I mean the distinction between any truth being *agreeable to reason when made known*, and the same truth being *discoverable by reason, without supernatural illumination.*—Some of the truths of revelation are so strikingly consonant to right reason, and, even when the hearts of men are at variance with them, commend themselves so instantly to their judgments, that we are apt to be seduced into the belief that mankind could never possibly be ignorant of them. When once revealed, the proof of which they are susceptible is so plain and so conclusive, that Reason gets the credit of their discovery, although uniform fact pronounces the credit to be undeserved.

Some, indeed, have gone so far on the other side, as to express a doubt whether mankind, entirely apart from revelation, could ever have attained to any conceptions *at all* of the being and perfections of God. If in the term *revelation* we include original and traditionary, as well as written revelation, it is obvious that this is a question, which hardly admits of any certain determination: for, on the supposition of original revelation having been possessed by men, (and of this there cannot surely be a doubt, on any ground, either of reason, or of scripture) it becomes quite impossible to say, what proportion even of the ideas which *have* prevailed in the world, should be considered as the remnants of sadly corrupted tradition: especially when we take into account the resemblance which has, in various instances, been discovered, and which in some cases, indeed, forces itself upon our observation,

* 1 Cor. i. 21.

between what is recorded in the beginning of the scripture revelation, respecting the great object of worship, and even the most fantastic notions and monstrous rites of Heathen superstition.

Let me now apply these general remarks to the great doctrine of the Divine UNITY.

This, it is obvious, is the prominent truth in our text.—

It is a doctrine in the highest degree agreeable to reason, when propounded and explained. Yet if natural religion comprehends those views only of "the things of God" which men *have actually attained* without revelation, it may admit of serious doubt, whether the Unity of the Godhead should be numbered amongst the articles of its creed. The general aspect of the Heathen world seems decidedly to affirm the contrary: for polytheism, in one form or other, has been universally prevalent in the public profession and worship of mankind. And even with regard to the two or three individual philosophers who appear to have arrived at more rational views on this important point, it may be observed—in the first place, that what they say consists more of shrewd conjecture than of any thing like certain knowledge; and is, besides, mingled with much ignorance and much falsehood: —and secondly, that even as to those notions which approach nearest to the truth, it has been matter of question, whether they might not have obtained them, directly or indirectly, from intercourse with that people to whom had been committed the oracles of God.

If, again, by the articles of Natural religion we are to understand those truths, which, whether men have actually discovered them without revelation or not, are *capable of being proved by sufficient natural arguments*, the question assumes quite a different aspect: for it is very plain, that a truth may

be perfectly susceptible of such evidence, while from inconsideration, or from worse causes, mankind may have failed to discern it.

Attempts have been made to prove the Unity of God, in the way of demonstration *a priori*, as philosophers speak;—that is, from the necessity and eternity of his existence. It has been found very difficult, however, even by minds of singular acuteness, to frame an argument of this kind, that shall at once be easily intelligible, and productive of clear and firm conviction. At least, to any demonstrations that have been constructed on this principle, strong objections have been opposed. And the reasonings for and against are much too subtile and metaphysical for public discussion.

The argument in support of the Divine Unity, derived from the visible works of Deity, is founded chiefly on the *uniformity of plan* which these works appear to exhibit. This uniformity indicates unity of design; and from unity of design, is inferred the operation of *one designer*.

That there are indications, strong and convincing, of harmony of plan, and unity of counsel, in the material universe, is beyond all question. In every department of Nature we perceive the application of certain general principles and laws of procedure; so that, to use the words of an admirable writer,* "we never get amongst such original or "totally different modes of existence, as to indicate that we "are come into the province of a different creator, or under "the direction of a different will."

I am fully satisfied, that the true cause of that melancholy ignorance of God, which has all along prevailed throughout the Heathen world, has not consisted in any deficiency as to the means of knowledge, nor in any want of natural capacity

* Paley.

to discern and to judge. Were either of these the case, the ignorance would have a valid excuse.—The cause is to be found in the want of a *right disposition of mind.* This is the great *original sin* of our nature, that blinds the understanding to the beauty of truth, and the deformity of error: and the powerful influence which it exerts upon the mind is most forcibly expressed by Paul, when he says respecting mankind, that "*they did not like* (or *choose*) *to retain God in their knowledge.*"*—The mere remembrance of what is already known, is a much easier matter than the discovery of what is previously unknown; especially if the memory is assisted by frequent repetitions, and multiplied manifestations, of the same truth. Men were originally possessed of the true knowledge of God. However inexcusable they might have been, had they been left, in a state of entire ignorance, to gather this knowledge, in the way of discovery, from the works of God, this was not, in fact, their situation. All that was to be effected by the numberless displays of the Divine power and Godhead, was only to *keep them in remembrance* of what they already knew. Yet even with these advantages, "*when they knew God,* they glorified him not as God;" they did not "*retain him in their knowledge;*" but "*changed the truth of God into a lie.*"—They received, at the first, a lesson from God himself:—they had this lesson written before their eyes on every thing arourd them:—every thing in heaven above and in earth beneath; every part of the animate and inanimate creation, repeated it to their eyes, and to all their senses, had they but kept them open to observation:—Yet they not only did not learn, but rejected and forgot what they had been taught; not only did not discover what was unknown, but lost what was known; and, instead of

* Rom. i. 28.

being led by the creature to the Creator, put the creature in the Creator's place!

These observations are applicable to the Unity of God, as well as to his existence and various perfections:—and if the want of a right disposition of mind operated thus positively to the loss of what was known, we cannot be surprised, that the same cause should have also operated negatively, to the prevention of the recovery of what was lost.

With regard to the Divine Unity, besides, although there are no difficulties that could stand in the way of a rightly disposed mind, there are some considerations, which, on a mind otherwise disposed, may easily be conceived to have their influence, in confirming it in ignorance.

The most obvious of these is, the mixture of good and evil, which prevails in our own world, and which forces itself on observation every day, and every moment.—This state of things, considered in itself, apart from any supposed traditionary knowledge of its origin, is not, on principles merely natural, very easily explicable.—It gave rise, accordingly, to the ancient Manichean doctrine, of two distinct eternal Beings, one good and the other evil, superintending the operations of two principles, corresponding to their respective natures; the good Being, supremely happy in himself, and the author of all the happiness that exists amongst creatures; the evil Being, in himself unhappy, and, from the malignity of his nature, the cause of all misery.—The variety of good and evil Deities, also, which is to be found in the mythology of every Heathen nation, indicates the operation of the very same principle of reasoning. If, in general, the sentiment prevails in these nations, of ONE of these Deities being superior to all the rest; instead of supposing this sentiment to be deduced from the observation of unity of design in the appearances of nature, the more probable supposition seems

to be, that it is the remains of the original and right belief respecting the Divine Unity, which, although so fearfully corrupted, other and opposite notions have not been able entirely to obliterate.

It may be further observed, that the evidence of *unity of design* is necessarily less obvious to a superficial observer, than the evidence of *design itself*.—The marks of design are discernible in each of the individual objects, that come within the reach of our observation: and every separate instance is a distinct and conclusive proof, of the existence and operation of a designing Cause.—Unity of design, on the contrary, must be discovered; not in each of the parts considered separately, but in the system of nature as a connected whole; in the harmonious relation of the parts to one another, and their joint influence in the production of a common effect.—It by no means follows from this, that the argument cannot be conclusive without a perfect knowledge of the whole creation. The case is the same, in this respect, as in the proof, from nature, of the Divine *wisdom*. In both instances we reason from analogy; and the reasoning is, in each, fair and conclusive. Finding the clearest and most astonishing indications of wisdom and skill, in all the productions of nature that come within our observation, we infer, that the same skill and wisdom would be found to pervade, and to characterize, those parts of the universe, that are beyond the range of our actual knowledge.—On the same reasonable principle of inference, we conclude, that unity of plan exists throughout the material universe, from the marks of such unity in that portion of it which the sphere of our observation embraces. The inference is, in both cases, greatly strengthened by the fact, that uniformly, in proportion as the inventive ingenuity of man has extended the range of his acquaintance with nature, the marks of design, on the one hand, and of harmony of design,

on the other, have been found progressively to multiply.—But although the evidence is, in both cases, satisfactory, it is not, I repeat, in both equally obvious. The proof of unity of design is, from its nature, more complex than the proof simply of intelligence and skill; requiring a greater extent of knowledge, and a greater power of comparison and combination; so that, viewing the evidence abstractly, and supposing ignorance of both, we should expect the discovery of the latter to precede that of the former.—This observation is much strengthened, in reference to the ruder states of human society, when we reflect how many appearances there are in nature, of more or less frequent occurrence, of which modern science has furnished satisfactory explanations, but which to the unenlightened mind appear utterly strange and inexplicable, and either suggest the suspicion, or ripen it into belief, of the agency of different beings, various in character and in power.

But further: even supposing harmony of plan demonstrated, and, by consequence, unity of design completely ascertained; is this, after all, a certainly conclusive proof of *only one designer?* Clearly not. It is admitted by one of the best writers on the principles of natural theology, that the whole of the argument for the Divine Unity, drawn from harmony of plan in the universe, "goes no further than to an unity of counsel."* Now, however high may be the degree of *probability*, arising from this, of the unity of the Divine Being, it is evident that it must be taken in connection with other considerations, to give it conclusive effect. For the *possibility* is abundantly obvious, of unity of counsel subsisting amongst a plurality of counsellors.†—Admitting the competence of one omnipotent and infinite Designer to

* Paley's Nat. Theol. chap. 25 p. 487. second edition. † See Note B.

produce every effect which is discernible throughout the Universe,—the inference does not seem to be an absolutely certain one *from this consideration alone*, that only one such Being exists:—for the philosophical principle that no more causes ought to be supposed than are sufficient to account for the effects, is not, in my apprehension, a principle which would at once suggest itself to the unscientific mind, or even one which affords always indisputable conclusions. The power of *one* man is *sufficient* to account for the existence of a watch. Yet we know we should be wide of the truth, were we to conclude that one such agent only was employed in the production of it. And numberless, indeed, amongst mankind, are the instances of such harmony of design and of effect, while there is a plurality of designers and efficient agents. How, then, is the mind, and especially the untutored mind, that is a stranger to the reasonings of philosophy, to infer *with certainty*, the existence of only one Almighty Agent, merely from the circumstance of one only being *necessary* to account for existing effects?

Let it not be thought from these remarks, that I regard the harmony of nature as *no proof* of the unity of the Godhead. It *is* a proof; and one as interesting and beneficial in its details, as it is satisfactory in its principle. I only question, whether it be a proof perfectly conclusive *by itself*. All that establishes the eternity and the infinitude of Deity, goes also to prove his unity; and the harmony of the universe concurs with every thing else in leading to the same conclusion.

But whatever may be the views we entertain, as to the extent of natural evidence in support of the Unity of the Godhead; there can be no doubt, that this doctrine forms one of the first and fundamental truths of Divine revelation.

It is in many places of the inspired volume distinctly and plainly affirmed; and it appears pervading the whole, as one of those great leading principles, to which it owes the peculiarity of its general complexion, and to which all the subordinate parts of the system bear a constant reference.

The people of Israel, accustomed to the idolatries of Egypt, and possessing, in their nature, the same evil propensities which produced departure from God among the Gentile nations, had manifested, in the wilderness, long before the time when Moses addressed to them the words of our text, a strong tendency to idolatrous defection. The same disposition continued to display itself during all the subsequent period of their history, till their return from the captivity in Babylon; after which time, their corruption, still retaining its inward dominion, appeared under other forms of outward transgression.—Against the indulgence of this propensity to depart from God, they were often warned, in the name of Jehovah, in the most solemn and awful terms; the warnings pronounced by their commissioned lawgiver, and by the prophets of after times, were frequently verified and impressed by the execution of signal judgments; and the continued repetition of the offence, in defiance both of warnings and of judgments, strikingly showed the strength and the infatuating influence of the corrupt inclination which led them astray.

That the Unity of God is a leading doctrine of the Scriptures, and that this doctrine is pointedly affirmed in the text, as an admonition to the Israelites against the polytheism of the surrounding nations, I need not, I apprehend, take time to prove.—I would rather proceed to observe, in consistency with the object which I have principally in view, that while the Unity of the Godhead is thus clearly affirmed, and forms a characteristic feature of both the Jewish and Christian

revelations, we are, by the same scriptures, taught also to believe, that in this one Godhead there are three distinct subsistences, which, for want of a better word, we are accustomed to denominate *persons*:—the FATHER, the SON or WORD, and the HOLY SPIRIT.

Whence, or on what accounts, these distinguishing appellations are given, is not the subject of our present inquiry. I only remark, in general, that we do not consider them as expressive of a distinction that is merely official, or as exhibiting the same Divine person under three different aspects:—but as implying a real personal distinction, which has subsisted from eternity, and is essential to the nature of Deity.

Of the precise import of the term *personality*, as applied to a distinction in the Divine essence, or of the peculiar nature and mode of that distinction, I shall not presume to attempt conveying to your minds any clear conception. I cannot impart to you what I do not possess myself:—and convinced as I am that such conception cannot be attained by any, it had been well, I think, if such attempts at explanation, by comparisons from nature, and otherwise, had never been made. They have afforded, to the enemies of the doctrine, much unnecessary occasion for unhallowed burlesque and blasphemy. —The Scriptures simply assure us of *the fact*:—of the *mode* of the fact they offer no explanation. And where the Bible is silent, it becomes us to be silent also; for when, in such cases, we venture to speak, we can only "darken counsel by words without knowledge."—The fact, and not the manner of it, being that which is revealed, is the proper and only object of our faith. We believe that *it is so*; but *how* it is so, we are not ashamed to say, we do not presume even to conjecture.

But, before proceeding further, it will be proper to show,

that what has been stated is indeed the doctrine of the scriptures.

Here, then, I would, first of all, observe, that while the text, as it stands in our English translation, appears simply to affirm the Unity of God, it affirms it, according to the proper import of the words in the original language, in connexion with the plurality of persons in the Godhead:—

"Hear O Israel, JEHOVAH, OUR GODS (ALEIM) IS ONE JEHOVAH.*

Unity and plurality are both here asserted; and the plurality is emphatically declared to be consistent with the Unity.—Let it not be alleged, that if the plural termination of the word in the original for God indicates plurality at all, it must denote not merely a plurality of persons, but a plurality of Gods.—The unity, it should be remembered, is not a subject of dispute. It is affirmed in the Scriptures. It is pointedly asserted in this very text. It is alike maintained by Trinitarians and Unitarians. The only inference that *can* be drawn, if any is to be drawn at all, from the plural name for God, is, that this unity is a unity of such a nature as admits distinction;—that God is one, but that, at the same time there is a plurality in the Godhead. The text itself, in which the divine unity is so peremptorily affirmed, necessarily precludes all inference beyond this.

The use of a plural noun for *GOD*, in the Hebrew language, and the construction of that noun with other nouns, and with verbs and pronouns, sometimes in the singular number, and sometimes in the plural, have often been noticed as remarkable anomalies; and these anomalies, or irregularities, are, at the same time, connected, on some occasions, with

* The candid reader will not imagine, that I propose this as a preferable translation or version of this and similar passages. I use the term *Gods* in the plural for no other purpose than to show to the mere English reader, that the Hebrew word *Aleim* is in that number.

particular modes of expression, such as seem to be utterly unaccountable, on any other principle than that of a plurality of persons in the Divine Unity; or at least (if this language should to any appear too confident) such as are by far most naturally explained as designed intimations of this plurality; —intimations, partaking of the indirectness and obscurity which characterise revelation in its earlier stages.

For example: In Gen. i. 26. Jehovah is represented as saying, with regard to the creation of man, "*Let* US *make man in* OUR *image, after* OUR *likeness.*"

This, it will not be denied, is very remarkable language: and attempts have, accordingly, been made to account for it, on various principles.

In the first place: It has by some been alleged, that *Angels* are here associated with Jehovah.—But surely nothing can be more unnatural and unworthy than such a supposition. What! The only living and true God sharing with his creatures his peculiar glory! consulting with them, in terms of equality, about a work, which is necessarily the exclusive prerogative of infinite power!—even that God, who so often claims this work, the work of creation, as entirely his own, and as distinguishing him from all pretenders to Divinity,—and who so solemnly declares, that He will not give his honour to another! Such an idea is too flagrantly inconsistent, to merit any lengthened exposure.—I may just add, however, that the Scriptures nowhere give any countenance to the notion of Angels having been employed in the creation of man, or of man's having been formed in the image of Angels.

2dly. By others, Jehovah has been considered as using, on this occasion, the language of *Majesty*, according to the practice of earthly potentates.

One should be apt to think the converse of this proposition

more probable; and that, if Moses employed the plural number as the peculiar style of Divine dignity, it had been afterwards, in the presumption of pride and vanity, assumed by the rulers of this world.—But, *in the first place*, it is not consistent with fact, that the Supreme Being is ever represented in the Scriptures as using this particular style.* It is indeed quite the contrary. In the most sublime and solemn portions of Holy writ, in which the Divine Majesty of heaven and earth is introduced as speaking, (where, surely, if anywhere, we might reasonably expect this peculiar style,) it is uniformly the singular number that is used.—*2dly.* Neither is there any reason whatever to think, that it was in point of fact, the style of the kings of the earth themselves, in the time of Moses; nor can any sufficiently clear and decisive instance of it be produced, from the whole Bible.†—*3dly.* When do we ever find an earthly monarch, *consulting with himself?—addressing proposals to himself?* Even if it had been the style of royalty in the days of Moses, the interpretation would be inadmissable: for in times and places in which it *is* the style of royalty, the expressions in question are still without a parallel; nothing of the same kind can be produced.—*4thly.* There is another passage which occurs soon after in the same book, and which is akin to the one now before us, only if possible, of still more unexampled singularity; to which, consequently, these remarks apply, with even a greater degree of force and conclusiveness. In Gen. iii. 22. Jehovah is introduced as saying, after the fall of Adam, "*Behold the man is become* AS ONE OF US, *to know good and evil.*"—"*As one of us!*" What can this language mean, when considered as

* The passages that form the subject of controversy are of course excepted; for to assume them as instances would be manifestly to beg the question. They form the phenomenon to be accounted for.

† See Note C.

the language of the one God? An earthly king might use such an expression, to comprehend his *fellow-kings;* all who possessed the same rank and authority with himself. But Jehovah stands alone. As the Sovereign of the universe, he has no compeers—no *fellow-gods.* No potentate amongst men could use an expression like this, in reference to *himself alone,* unless under the influence of a disordered mind. Yet thus the inspired historian represents Jehovah as speaking; and there seems to be here no principle of easy and natural interpretation, but that which is afforded by the doctrine of the TRINITY.—That the terms imply *plurality,* is beyond all question; and the principle of solution adopted for explanation of the former text, that it is the language of *majesty* used by *one person,* is obviously, in this instance, incapable of the remotest application. But it has again been alleged, that Jehovah includes *angels* with himself, and that the meaning simply is, that the man was become as one of the persons, not in the Trinity, but *in the heavenly host.* On this interpretation I might again, as before, appeal to the common sense and piety of my hearers, whether it be natural, or consistent with right impressions of the majesty of the Divine Sovereign, to suppose him thus placing himself on a footing with his creatures,—taking them in along with himself as belonging to the same class or description of beings—speaking to his angels in terms of familiarity, as if He were only first among his compeers!—The text, moreover, which has sometimes been referred to, in support of the explanation, is, in my mind, decisive against it:—"In the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be *as Gods,* knowing good and evil." *Gods,* it is assumed, in this language of the tempter, means *angels:* and to them, therefore, it is concluded, we may reasonably suppose the allusion to be made in the words under discussion. But that angels are meant in the devil's language, is very far

from being certain. There seems to be no propriety in rendering the same word (the name of God) in the *singular* number, and in its *supreme* sense, in the *former* part of the verse, and in the *plural* number, and *inferior* sense, in the *latter*—"*God* doth know that ye shall be *as gods*." In my mind it admits of no doubt, that the true translation of the tempter's words is, "GOD doth know, that in the day ye eat "thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be AS "GOD, knowing good and evil." This at once gives the temptation all its force, and all its malignity; and at the same time preserves the same word (and a leading word too) from shifting its meaning in the same short sentence:—a principle of grammar from which hardly any plea short of necessity can justify, a deviation. If this explanation of the words be well founded, then we have only to compare the expression "ye shall be AS GOD, knowing good and evil," with the expression, "behold the man is become AS ONE OF US, to "know good and evil," to determine irrefragably the validity of the argument derived from the latter, for a plurality of persons in the Divine unity. The two expressions, occurring in the narrative of the same event, are correlatives;—and ought to be interpreted as having the same reference, and the same extent of meaning. According to the interpretation just given, this is strictly the case. According to the other interpretation, it is far from being so. The *temptation itself* is, "ye shall be as *gods*" (or *angels*); *the supreme God not being at all included*:—but in the record of the success and effect of the temptation, He *is* included. He does not then address his angels, and say "the man is become as one of YOU;" which would have accorded with the language of the temptation, if *Aleim* meant angels; but he *goes beyond the extent of the temptation*,—by including *Himself*:—"the man is become as one of US." The same persons too who are represented

as originally saying, "Let us make man," ought, on all reasonable principles of exposition, to be understood as also speaking here, "Behold the man is become *as one of* us." If the Creator speaks in the plural at the formation of man, why not the Lawgiver and Governor at the fall of man?*—An expression precisely of the same description with the one I have just been considering, occurs in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, the 6th and 7th verses, in the account there given of the confusion of languages at Babel: "The Lord said, behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. *Go to, let* us *go down* and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."—I need not say, that to this passage the observations which have been made apply, with the same force as to the one on which they have been founded.

The plural name of God is most generally connected with verbs in the singular number. It is so in the words, from the first chapter of Genesis, which we have just been considering; and about thirty times, indeed, in the course of the same chapter. It is worthy of notice, that while, in the declaration of the Divine purpose, "*God said let us make man in our image,*" terms are employed expressive of plurality, the style of *unity* is resumed, in the record of the execution of the purpose; "So God created man in *his* image; in the image of God created he him."

Not unfrequently, however, as before noticed, this name, itself in the plural, is associated, in syntax, with verbs, adjectives, and pronouns, in the same number. For example "Ye cannot serve Jehovah: for he is a *holy God*:" the

* See Note D.

adjective *holy* as well as the name of *God*, is, in the original, in the plural number.—"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth:" In the Hebrew "thy *Creators*."—"Thy maker is thy husband; Jehovah of hosts is his name:"—both the nouns *maker* and *husband* are plural,—thy *makers*—thy *husbands*.—"If I be a master, (in the Hebrew, "If I be *masters*") where is my fear?"—"The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy, (in the original the *holy ones*) is understanding."*—These are quoted as a specimen, merely to show you what I mean. A very considerable number of instances, of various descriptions, might be added.

This kind of anomaly, which pervades the phraseology of the whole Old Testament revelation, where the writers appear at liberty, under Divine inspiration, to use sometimes the one mode of expression, and sometimes the other, finds a principle of solution, sufficiently natural, in the truth of the doctrine which I am endeavouring to defend; nor is it easy to assign to it, if this doctrine is proscribed, an origin equally simple and satisfactory.

A variety of other proofs might be adduced, on this subject, from the Old Testament scriptures. They are to be found, for example, in such expressions as these:—"And now the LORD GOD, and HIS SPIRIT hath sent me:"† words uttered

* Joshua xxiv. 19. Eccl. xii. 1. Isa. liv. 5. Mal. i. 6. Prov. ix. 10.

† Isa. xlviii. 16. Such is our translation. Dr. Smith, keeping more closely to the arrangement of the Hebrew, considers "his Spirit" as in the accusative case:—"The LORD GOD hath sent ME and HIS SPIRIT." He concludes his comments thus:—"The more closely we examine this text, the more we are led to perceive it to be the declaration of Him "whose hand founded the earth, and whose right hand expanded the heavens," and who is "from the beginning;" but whom "the Father set apart and sent into the world." The mutual illustration of this passage and many in the New Testament, cannot but rise to the recollection of the serious reader. In prophecy, the Messiah declares, "The Lord Jehovah hath sent me and his Spirit;" and, when actually

by one, who himself, in the former part of the verse, uses the language of Jehovah.*—"Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; for MY mouth it hath commanded, and HIS SPIRIT it hath gathered them:"† with others of a similar description.—But as it is not my purpose, (for which my reason will appear by and by) to enter at large into the evidence of the Trinity in general, I shall rather go forward to those of the New Testament; proceeding, at the same time, with regard to them also, on the same principle; selecting only one or two of the most prominent passages.

Of these, most of you will doubtless expect, that one at least, if not the very first, should be the remarkable verse in the fifth chapter of the first epistle of John. "*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.*" And certainly this text should have been entitled to hold the first place, had its genuineness been undisputed, or disputed, as that of some other texts has been, on slender grounds. I freely acknowledge, however, that the evidence of the spuriousness of this celebrated passage, if it were even much less conclusive than, in my mind, it appears to be, would be quite sufficient to prevent me from resting upon it any part of the weight of this argument.‡

sojourning with men,—"I came forth from the Father, and I have come into the world;" "the Comforter whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify concerning me."—Script. Test. Vol. I. p. 376.

* Comp. ch. xlv. 19. † Isa. xxxiv. 16.

‡ Volumes have been written about this text. Critics of eminent reputation, and of opposite theological tenets, have differed in their conclusions. I wish it to be understood, as one of my objects, by declining to build on any texts which are thus disputed, not to express my decided opinion respecting their genuineness, but to show that our cause does not depend upon them,—that our evidence is abundant and clear, even on the supposition of the spuriousness of every one of them.

I shall confine myself, at present, to a few remarks on two passages only.

The first is the form of baptism, prescribed by our Lord, in the commission which he gave to his apostles, immediately before he left the world; and which you will find in the nineteenth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of the gospel according to Matthew:—"*Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*"

On the very first aspect of this text, it seems most unreasonable to suppose, that the one true God is here associated with two of his creatures; or with one of his creatures, and an attribute, or energy, or mode of operation. It appears to me, that the simple statement of such an interpretation should be sufficient to ensure its immediate and unqualified rejection.—Yet the unreasonableness is increased, when the words are considered as the terms of an initiatory rite, connected with a religion, in which all worship but what is addressed to the one Jehovah, is, under every form, whether expressed or implied, so decidedly and totally condemned. —The apostles were to teach the Gentiles, that they should "turn from those vanities which they worshipped, to the living God:" and those who received their instructions they were to baptize "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." What, then, must have occurred to their hearers and converts, from the use of these words, but that they were now, instead of the multitude of their former deities, to adore and serve the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as the one living and true God?—Baptism was to be administered, in the name of all the three, in the very same way; and surely, therefore, there is the fairest reason to conclude, in the same sense. It is not, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of his two servants, the Son

and the Holy Spirit;"—nor even, "baptizing them in the name of God, and of Christ, and of the Spirit:"—but, without the slightest intimation or symptom of any change in the meaning of the expression, in its application to one of the persons more than to another—"baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." —The very same kind, and the very same degree, of honour and reverence, that are paid in this rite to one, are paid, as far as language can indicate the meaning of the speaker, alike to all.*

The second passage is the form of apostolic benediction, used in the conclusion of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians:—"*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all! Amen!*"

That this form of blessing includes in it a prayer, it would be a waste of words to prove. To whom, then, is this prayer addressed?—Had it been simply said, "*The love of God be with you all! Amen!*" no one, I suppose, would have hesitated to say, that, when the apostle thus expressed himself, he presented, in his heart, a petition to the Father of mercies, for the manifestations of his love to the believers at Corinth.—On what principle of criticism, then, are we to interpret the expression, "*the grace, or favour, of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" an expression so precisely the same in form, in a different sense? in a sense that does not imply Jesus Christ's being the object of a similar inward aspiration? And the same question might be asked, with regard to the remaining phrase, "*the communion of the Holy Spirit.*"—It should be considered, too, that the Corinthians, to whom he thus wrote, would at once associate the phraseology employed

* See some further observations on this text, in the beginning of the ninth discourse.

with the terms of the initiatory ordinance of baptism, to which they had submitted on their entrance into the Christian church. They would perceive the coincidence between the one and the other; and would understand the apostle as addressing himself, in their behalf, to the three persons in whose name they had, upon his own instruction, been baptized.—I would only further ask at present, how we can suppose an inspired man, or even a man of common understanding, to recommend, in the solemn language of prayer, his converts and brethren, to the love of God, and to the favour and communion of two of his creatures; or to the love of God, the favour of a man, and the communion of an attribute, or influence, or energy? and that, too, not only in terms so exactly alike, but with a precedence given to the creature, in the order of address?*

I must now remark, that these are proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity *in general.* The argument, however, is cumulative. It is my design, in a series of discourses, to prove, distinctly, the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit: and the evidence in support of the general doctrine is not properly closed, till all this mass of separate proof has been adduced, and illustrated. You must not, therefore, imagine, that we have now done with the proof of the subject which has been under consideration. Much more of a general nature might have been said; but as all that will come to be advanced, on the particular topics of the Deity of Christ and of the Spirit, will be found to bear, directly and fully, on the doctrine in question, I have purposely forborne entering into it more at large.

But, in answer to all our reasonings, it is by many thought

* See Note D.

sufficient to say,—The doctrine of which you have been speaking is a *mystery*.—I shall not here enter into any critical explanation of the sense in which the term *mystery* is employed by the New Testament writers:—but, understanding it according to its ordinary acceptation, as signifying something that is either difficult to be conceived, or entirely incomprehensible, (the latter of these being obviously the meaning affixed to it in the terms of the objection)—I freely and explicitly admit, that the doctrine in question *is* a mystery,—a mystery in the strongest sense of the word. But while I admit, without hesitation, the truth of the proposition expressed in the objection, I as distinctly deny the validity of the objection itself.—If the mysterious and incomprehensible nature of the doctrine in question, be a sufficient reason for its rejection, then may this reason be, with safety, generalized, and reduced to a principle, of universal application. The principle will be: *Every thing that is mysterious and incomprehensible ought to be disbelieved.* Supposing, then, for a moment, the correctness of this principle, let us see what will become of some of the fundamental truths even of Natural Religion. —Take, for example, the *omnipresence* of Deity. We believe this to be one of his essential attributes. We are accustomed to say, without any feeling of hesitation, that *God is here.* Yet we believe and affirm, with quite as little hesitation, that he is, at the same moment, equally present in the remotest part of the universe, at the distance of millions of millions of miles:—that he is present here, and present there, in the possession and exercise of all his infinite perfections. But while certain modes of expression are, on this subject, familiar to our minds, have we ever endeavoured to analyze the conceptions which these modes of expression appear to convey? Have we ever tried to answer to ourselves the question, *How is it*, that this infinite Being is every where

present? *How is it*, that he exercises, at the same instant in every point of space to which his presence extends, all the infinite perfections of his Nature?—Is he a *spiritual substance*, infinitely extended? Against this notion of *infinite extension* there have been advanced powerful objections; such as, though they do not shake our belief, we find it difficult if not impossible fully to obviate:—and the truth is, that if we imagine we possess any conception at all of the *mode* of the Divine omnipresence and omniscience, we greatly deceive ourselves. That the Supreme God is so present with every creature, as to have a perfect knowledge of that creature, and an absolute power over it, is a truth susceptible of the strictest demonstration. But as to the *manner* in which the infinite Spirit is thus every where present; as to the manner in which he possesses this knowledge, and exerts this power, we are safest when we say, *We cannot tell.**

But why illustrate the falsehood of the principle I am now considering, from what regards the essence and perfections of Deity? Is there no mystery in any thing beneath his infinite nature? Is not the observation as true as it is trite, that every thing around us is full of mystery?—We are a mystery to ourselves. We have no sort of accurate conception of the nature of that union which subsists, in our own persons, between the body and the soul; between gross corporeal substance, and invisible, immaterial spirit. This union, with all its singular phenomena, has been, still is, and I believe we may with safety say, ever will be, an inscrutable mystery. Philosophical men have marked, with increasing attention and accuracy, the various and complicated results of this union; and they have often fondly deceived themselves, by imagining

* This consideration is applied, in a subsequent discourse to the subject of the union of the Divine nature with the human in the person of Christ.

they have discovered a cause, when, after all, they have only been applying the terms expressive of causation, to some effect less obvious to ordinary discernment than the one for which they were endeavouring to account. The various theories of nervous influence, with their different degrees of ingenuity and plausibility, are no more than physiological guesses at a particular fact. Of the manner in which mind is united to matter:—of the way in which the one operates upon the other:—of the question *how* nerves convey volitions and transmit intelligence; they leave us in as profound ignorance as ever.—What, then, shall we say? Is it reasonable, that a creature, who cannot, voluntarily, shut his eyes, or open his mouth, or lift his finger, without an incomprehensible mystery, should be startled and offended, because in what God reveals concerning his own infinite nature, he finds something which he cannot understand?—that a creature who feels himself baffled, in his greatest efforts of intellect, by the vegetation of a blade of grass, or the nature of the vital principle which moves the wing of the smallest insect that glitters in the sunbeam, should be startled and offended, because he cannot comprehend the essence, and the mode of existence, of the infinite God?

> "In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
> All would be Gods, and rush into the skies."

And we are not ignorant, when and whence this pride originated. When the devil, presenting his allurements to that ambition which his own suggestions insinuated into the human heart, said to our first parents, "*Ye shall be as God;*" no sooner was the temptation complied with, than man, becoming the victim of a disordered mind, began to fancy himself what the tempter had promised he should be: and

ever since, pride has swayed the sceptre of the unrenewed soul.—But surely, if there be a subject, amongst all that can occupy the mind, in the contemplation of which we should be humble and self-diffident; it is the nature of the infinite Jehovah. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is higher than heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."*

The doctrine of which I now speak, is freely admitted to be *above reason.* But it is of consequence to observe, that, on this very account, it seems impossible to prove it *contrary to reason.* It is a common and a just remark, that there is an essential difference between any thing being above reason and being contrary to it; and that it may be the former without being the latter. I think, we may go a step farther; and affirm, as I have just hinted, that the very circumstance of its being the former precludes the possibility of proving it to be the latter. I question whether any thing that is above reason can ever be shown to be contrary to it. For unless we have some notion of the thing itself, on what principle can we possibly make out the contrariety? Were we to say that the persons of the Godhead are one and three *in the same sense*; we should evidently affirm what is *contrary* to reason; because such a proposition would involve, in the very terms of it, an irreconcilable contradiction: but so long as we do not pretend to know, or to say, *how* they are one, and *how* they are three; to prove that we assert what is contrary to reason when we affirm that they are both, is, from the very nature of the thing, impossible. For what is it which is to be proved contrary to reason? Upon the supposition made, *we cannot tell:* it is

* Job xi. 7—9.

something which we do not know; of the nature and circumstances of which we are left in total ignorance.—The truth is, we are lost, completely lost, whenever we begin, in any view of it whatever, to think about the Divine essence. We can form no more distinct conception of a Being that never began to exist, or of a Being that is every where present, and yet is wholly nowhere, than we can of one essence, in which there are, and have been from eternity, three distinct subsistences.

A subject such as this, is far from being without use. It is eminently fitted to humble the pride of human intellect, and to make us remember, and feel, that we are creatures: a truth, it may be thought, sufficiently obvious; but one which we are in no small danger, on such subjects, of at least practically forgetting. Incalculable mischief has arisen from men's aspiring at knowledge beyond the reach of their own, or of any finite powers, and beyond the limits of the Divine declarations. Yet the attempt to comprehend the mode in which the Divine Unity subsists in three persons, is certainly not more foolish, than it is to refuse credence to the fact, because it exceeds our comprehension. He who does so, on such a subject as this, must either, as we have seen, be guilty of the most palpable and glaring inconsistencies, or else the limits of his belief must be narrow indeed. There is hardly a point, in fact, at which a man of this description can consistently stop, short of universal scepticism. O the presumptuous arrogance of the human mind, that will not be satisfied, unless the nature of the infinite God is brought down to the comprehension of a creature, whose faculties are so limited, that he is puzzled, confounded, and lost, in the consideration of *himself!* and to whom there is not a single object in existence which does not present mysteries, that mock all his efforts at explanation!

Let us not forget, what is the proper province of reason,

with regard to Divine revelation:—a subject to which we directed your attention in a former discourse. We ought, beyond all controversy, to exercise our reason, in determining the question, whether this book contains a revelation from God. This we must do, by an examination of the evidences, of various kinds, external and internal, by which its high claims are substantiated.—But suppose this great point fairly ascertained: what is the province of reason *then?* Is it not equally beyond controversy, that, *on this supposition*, the only rational conduct is *implicit faith?* Once ascertain the Scriptures to be "given by inspiration of God," and nothing can be more absurd, than to erect our reason into a standard of the truth or falsehood of what they contain. This would be to deify reason: to "exalt it above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." It would be to admit that the declarations of this book possess the authority of God, and, at the same time, to question and deny them on the authority of reason;—to question and deny them, that is, on our own authority; thus assuming to ourselves the arrogant office of censors on the dictates of infinite wisdom and infinite truth. —It is true, that the contents of this book ought to be examined, as forming what has been called the internal evidence of its Divine authority. If it could be shown to contain what was clearly contradictory, the discovery would be a proof, sufficiently convincing, of its not being from God. This, however, is firmly, and without qualification, denied. I am arguing, too, at present, on the supposition of its being acknowledged as a revelation from heaven. And I repeat, that for any man to profess to believe that the Bible is the word of God, and yet not implicitly to regulate his convictions by the question, "What saith the scripture?" is of all conduct the most unreasonable and inconsistent.

For my own part, so far from being staggered by finding

mysteries in revelation, I am satisfied, that the entire absence of them would have formed a much stronger ground for suspicion. All analogy excites and justifies the expectation of them. *Nature*, in its various departments, is full of them: and shall we, then, account it strange, that there should be any in the department of *grace?* They abound in the *works* of God: why, then, should we not look for them in his *word?* They present themselves in the nature and constitution of every one of *his creatures:* and is it to be conceived, that in *his own* nature and essence, nothing of the kind should be found? Is it reasonable to think, that all should be plain and easily comprehensible, which relates to God himself, and that inexplicable difficulties should embarrass and stop our researches, only in what regards his creatures? Ought we not rather, on such a subject, to anticipate difficulties?—to expect to feel the inadequacy and the failure of our faculties?—and to expect this, with a certainty proportioned to the superior magnitude of the subject above all others that can engage our attention, and its complete and absolute exclusion from the sphere of all our senses, and of all our experience? If finite things every moment confound us, ought we to be surprised at finding that we cannot comprehend what is infinite?—Let us remember, my brethren, the apostolical lesson, and let it be our desire, that we may think, and feel, and act, on all subjects, and on all occasions, consistently with the principle and spirit of it: "I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF MORE HIGHLY THAN HE OUGHT TO THINK, BUT TO THINK SOBERLY."*

I shall conclude this Discourse with a single practical observation.

* Rom. xii. 3.

While the unity of the Godhead is proclaimed in the text, in terms fitted to impress the vast importance of the doctrine on the minds of the Israelites, they are admonished, with the same earnestness, to hear, and to retain in their remembrance, the DUTY which they owed to "Jehovah their God, the one Jehovah:"—"*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*"—This, according to the testimony of our Saviour himself, is "the first and great commandment:"* and it may be considered as the principle and sum of all the rest.—It is a righteous law; "holy, and just, and good." It finds a testimony in every conscience, that is not seared to utter insensibility.—But alas! it is a law which we have broken. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." And in the violation of this law, which respects the inward spring of all our conduct, is involved the breach, in their great principle, of all the other commandments of God.—We have not given to God the supreme, and affectionate, and practical homage of our hearts. In withholding it, we have sinned: and having sinned, we are justly condemned.—This is the state in which the gospel finds us: this is the state, indeed, that renders the gospel necessary.—The gospel is a manifestation of God's love to his enemies. "Herein is love, *not that we loved God*, but that *he loved us*, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."† It is the object of the gospel, to reconcile these enemies to God: to bring them to a participation of his pardoning favour and paternal love, and to the renewed exercise of love to Him. It is "the word of reconciliation:" and the ministry of it is "the ministry of reconciliation."—"Now then," says the apostle of the Gentiles, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us; we pray men in Christ's stead, Be ye

* Matth. xxii. 37, 38. † 1 John iv. 10.

reconciled to God: for He hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*—When a sinner, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, believes this testimony, and complies with this invitation, the enmity of his heart is subdued:—love to God, for what he is, and for what he has done, complacential and grateful love, takes possession of his soul: and, although mingled and polluted with the foul dregs of remaining corruption, it becomes the spring of his future conduct; emitting, in all directions, streams of the same nature with itself, although tainted proportionally with the same pollution. He is no longer "without law to God," but is "under the law to Christ." He lives to God. He "has his fruit unto holiness, and his end everlasting life."

* 2 Cor. v. 19—21.

DISCOURSE III.

ON THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

1 JOHN v. 20.

"——*his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God.*"

IN last discourse, I endeavoured, from the words of Moses to the Israelites in Deut. iv. 4. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is one Lord," to illustrate the great doctrine of the Divine Unity.

After a few introductory remarks, on the unreasonableness of Deists in smiling, with scorn, at the diversity of sentiment amongst professed believers in revelation, while, in proportion to the limits of their own creed, a diversity no less striking is found to prevail among themselves; and also on some of the causes which may contribute to produce this difference of opinion, amongst those who agree in rejecting the Divine authority of the Bible:—I proceeded to consider a little, how far this important doctrine of the Unity of God, is entitled to be ranked among the articles of Natural Religion; and closed some desultory observations on this question, by remarking, that, whatever judgment we might form concerning it, no doubt whatever could exist, as to the doctrine under consideration being a prominent and essential article of revealed truth.

I then attempted to show, from a variety of passages, in the Scriptures both of the Old Testament, and of the New (the only source of information possessed by us on the subject), that in the Unity of the Godhead there are three

distinct subsistences, which, wanting a more appropriate term, we denominate *persons*—the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Spirit*.—On this subject I stated, that the *fact* is revealed, while the *mode* of the fact, remaining an undiscovered secret, is not the proper object of our faith:—that, although this doctrine does, without doubt, involve in it a mystery, that is, in the ordinary sense of the term, something that is incomprehensible; yet, nothing can be more unreasonable, than either to reject Christianity because it contains what is mysterious, or to resolve on expunging all mystery from its authenticated records; for that both the nature of the subject, and all analogy, fully justified even a previous expectation that mysteries should be found. I observed, that not only is the ordinary distinction well founded, between what is *above* reason and what is *contrary* to it; but that it seems, in the nature of the thing, impossible to prove that to be contrary to reason, which is admitted to be above it; because nothing can be shown to contradict reason, which we do not at all understand:—that there are, in Natural Religion, mysteries not less incomprehensible than those of the Christian system:—that he who withholds his faith from a declared fact, because the *manner* of it is beyond his comprehension, must, if he would be consistent with himself, contract within very narrow limits indeed, the range of his belief:—and that, while reason ought to be exercised, with a seriousness becoming the importance of the subject, in ascertaining, by the examination of evidence, whether the Holy Scriptures be a revelation from God; yet, this important point being once settled, so far is implicit faith from being unreasonable, that the contrary is irrational in the extreme; an impious deification of reason; an exaltation of its authority above the authority of God.

It is impossible to resume the illustration of these various

and important topics.—Of one other observation, however, I must particularly remind you:—that the argument in support of the doctrine of the Trinity was not, by any means, completed, when those passages of Scripture had been adduced, in which that doctrine is asserted or implied in its full extent; in which, that is, all the three persons of the Godhead are introduced together: that the proofs of the Divinity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, form distinct portions of the same body of evidence; all bearing directly on the one great general truth.

I now, therefore, proceed to a part of my subject, which is, without controversy, of pre-eminent importance:—THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

To impress upon your minds the vast importance of this subject, let me entreat you to consider it a little, *in its own nature*, in *its connexion with our most interesting and solemn duties*, and in its *relation to other truths*.

Contemplate this subject, *in the first place*, in *its own nature*.—There are some doctrines which we at once perceive, as soon as they are stated, I do not say to be of no value (for nothing which God has been pleased to make known is destitute of value), but to be doctrines of comparatively minor consequence; while there are others, which we as immediately discern to be of essential and vital importance. To the latter of these classes the doctrine before us will, without hesitation, be referred, by every reflecting mind. If it be indeed a truth, that Jesus Christ is "GOD OVER ALL," it is utterly impossible that it can be a truth of subordinate magnitude. The simple statement of it is enough to show that it must rank as a *first principle*;—an article of prime importance; a foundation-stone in the Temple of Truth; a star of the very first magnitude in the hemisphere of Christian doctrine.—

For my own part, I believe it to be even more than this; a kind of central Sun, around which the whole system of Christianity, in all its glory, and in all its harmony, revolves.

This view of its importance is confirmed, when we consider it, *secondly*, in *its connexion with our most interesting and solemn duties.* I mean the duties which we owe to the great object of supreme reverence, worship, and obedience.—If Jesus Christ be not God, then we, who offer to him that homage of our hearts which is due to God alone, are, without doubt, guilty of *idolatry;* as really guilty as the worshippers of the deified heroes of Greece or Rome. We are guilty, like them, of "changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man;" of thus alienating the honours of him who hath declared, that he "will not give his glory to another." This, surely, is no trifle.—But is it, on the other hand, a trifle,—is it fitted to excite no serious concern, no uneasy apprehension—to withhold Divine honour from one to whom it is due? to divest of his Supreme dignity, and to equalize with ourselves, puny worms of the dust, one whom Angels and Archangels adore, as "over all, God blessed for ever?"—Consequences of such magnitude, on both sides, certainly stamp with immense importance the inquiry on which we are now entering.

The same thing is manifest, *thirdly*, from *the intimate relation which this doctrine bears to others.*—It is an integral part of a system of truths, which stand or fall along with it. It is connected, for example, in the closest manner, with the purpose of Christ's appearance upon earth, and the great design of his sufferings and death; that is, with the vitally important doctrine of *atonement:—this* doctrine, again, is inseparably connected with the corruption of human nature, and the universal guilt of mankind; from which it is that the

necessity of such atonement arises:—this, in its turn, essentially affects the question, respecting the true ground of a sinner's acceptance with God; the necessity of the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit; the principle and motive of all acceptable obedience; and other points of similar consequence. It is very obvious, that two systems, of which the sentiments, on subjects such as these, are in direct opposition, cannot, with any propriety, be confounded together under one common name. That both should be Christianity, is impossible; else Christianity is a term which distinguishes nothing. Viewing the matter abstractly, and without affirming, for the present, what is truth and what is error, this, I think, I may with confidence affirm, that to call schemes so opposite in all their great leading articles by a common appellation, is more absurd, than it would be to confound together those two irreconcilable theories of astronomy, of which the one places the Earth, and the other the Sun, in the centre of the Planetary System.—They are, in truth, *essentially different religions.* For if opposite views as to the *object of worship*, the *ground of hope for eternity*, the *rule of faith and duty*, and the *principles and motives of true obedience*;—if opposite views as to these do not constitute different religions, we may, without much difficulty, discover some principle of union and identity amongst all religions whatever; we may realize the doctrine of Pope's universal prayer; and extend the right hand of fellowship to the worshippers at the Mosque, and to the votaries of Brama.*

Such, then, is the importance, direct and relative, of this point of doctrine,—that Jesus Christ is truly God; that in his person there subsisted, when he was on earth, and still subsists, an union of the Divine and human nature.

The same distinction, which was formerly stated on the

* Some further remarks on this important subject, will be found in the concluding discourse of the series.

subject of the Trinity in general, ought here also to be kept in mind: I mean the distinction between the *fact*, and the *mode* of the fact. The former alone is revealed; and it alone, therefore, is the object of faith. As in the case of the doctrine of the Trinity, so in this case, we believe that *it is so;* but *how* it is so, we do not pretend to know, far less to explain.—The only questions which we think ourselves entitled to ask, are: "Is this book a revelation from God?" And, supposing it to be so, "Does it testify this fact?" The mysteriousness of the fact cannot, in the present case, any more than in the former, and for the same reasons as were then assigned, be any valid objection to our believing it.—How that which is infinite, can be united with that which is finite;—the infinite nature of Deity, with the finite nature of a creature,—of a mortal man,—is at once admitted to be beyond our comprehension. But let us see here, as in the former case, whether there be not, in some of the Divine perfections, of the existence of which we are not disposed to speak with even the slightest measure of doubt, something quite as incomprehensible; felt to be so, whenever we attempt to make it the subject of fixed thought, or of distinct conception. I refer to the same attribute of Deity, from which I took my illustration formerly. We ascribe *omnipresence* to God. We say that God is *here.* But *how*, I ask, is he here? How *can* that which is *infinite* be *here?* What is the nature of that connexion, which subsists between a Being who is infinite, whose existence is boundless, and any particular limited portion of space? As soon as our opponents have answered *this* question, we shall be able, I think, to answer theirs, What is the nature of the connexion between the infinite nature of Deity, and the finite nature of "the man Christ Jesus?" The principle which affords a satisfactory answer to the one, will afford an answer equally satisfactory to the other. That is, they are both

alike unanswerable:—for I do not introduce the one case, as furnishing any explanation of the other, so as to render it more easily comprehensible; but only to show, how apt we are, in one instance, hastily to assume impossibility and contradiction, while in another, in which the difficulty is equally great, we are accustomed to speak, as if we were not sensible that there exists any difficulty at all.—And indeed the Divine omnipresence *has* at times been spoken of as if little or no difficulty were felt about it. We have been told, for example, that the spiritual substance of Deity pervades space, just as air fills a room.—Now, in the first place, I ask, does this give us *any idea at all* of what the spiritual essence or substance of Deity *is?* Air is a fluid, possessing the properties of weight and elasticity, and susceptible of condensation and rarefaction. We cannot surely for a moment associate such ideas with the pure spirituality of the Godhead.—I ask again, on the supposition of an infinitely extended substance, must not *a part* be in *one* place, and *a part in another?*—a part only of God in heaven, and a part on earth?—Then, if this spiritual substance be thus divisible, a part here and a part there, must we not also have *a part* of the Divine *knowledge* and *power* in one place, and a part in another?—Or, if this be objected to, and it be alleged that Divine attributes are incapable of subdivision;—then, is every point of the extended substance of Deity possessed of infinite perfections?—every point omniscient and omnipotent?—every point possessed of equal power and intelligence with the whole?—Describe *a sphere*, of whatever dimensions you please, from a foot diameter to a thousand leagues, (for they bear the very same proportion to infinitude);—I ask, Is God *there?* Is he *entirely* there? Or is it a part only of God,—a portion of his infinitely extended substance that is there?—You may be greatly shocked by questions such as these. I do not wonder that you should. I am

shocked by them myself. Yet there is no impiety, in asking questions which make us to feel our weakness and incompetency on such subjects:—no impiety, in thus impressing on men's minds, that they cannot by searching find out God.—The immediate bearing of the questions on the particular point in hand, will be sufficiently obvious to every discerning hearer. I insist upon it, that there is *nothing more incomprehensible in the idea of the Divine nature being associated with the human in the person of Jesus Christ, than there is in the idea of the infinite God being present in any limited portion of space.* If a Socinian shall say, How can it be, that the infinite nature of God should be united with the finite and limited nature of a man? I freely answer, I cannot tell: but I meet the question with another, and ask again, How can it be, that the infinite nature of Deity should be present in every point of space?—should be present, in the full exercise of all its infinite perfections, within the little area bounded by the walls of the room in which we sit, or the place in which we assemble? I insist upon it, that, when Socinians shall have found an answer to the latter question, they will have furnished us with a principle on which to answer the former: and that the circumstance of the former being beyond our comprehension, is no more a sufficient reason for disbelieving it, than the same circumstance of incomprehensibility in the latter.—Its being altogether inconceivable by us, "is no more a proof against its being "fact, than" (to use the words of Dr. Guyse on another, but similar subject) "the inconceivableness of the *manner* how the "whole Divine Being and all its essential attributes, are "always at once entirely in heaven, and on earth too, is a "proof against God's omnipresence. Though such omni-"presence may seem impossible to us, yet we must allow it to "be real, it being the most monstrous and absurd notion of "God to suppose, that only a part of God, a part of his

"Being, a part of his attributes, is in heaven, and another "part of God is on earth. And *if we must believe the puzzling "incomprehensible in one case, why should we startle at it, and "for that reason alone reject it in the other?*"*—It has often been remarked, that a child may ask questions, which the shrewdest philosopher shall be unable to answer. And there is no subject on which this is more true, than the nature and perfections of God.

A subject of this kind, it is easy in the extreme to burlesque and ridicule: and the propensity to this sort of profane jesting, has, alas! been too often indulged.—But surely it is not a theme for unhallowed merriment, or sarcastic wit. It is a doctrine, from the truth or falsehood of which there arise, as we have seen, consequences so highly important, that the man is to be pitied, who is capable of treating it with levity. —That it is a mystery, is granted. But so is also the topic just now alluded to—the presence of the infinite God, in a limited point of space; and so are many other things which we are accustomed to consider as undeniable truths. That the union of the human nature with the Divine, in the person of Jesus Christ, implies any change in Deity—or any thing like a confinement of the infinite Jehovah, we are not so senseless as for a moment to suppose. But we do affirm, that in the person of Jesus, the human nature is, in some way unknown to us, so united with the Divine, as to have itself no distinct subsistence apart from that union:—that, in this sense, he is "God manifest in the flesh."

Nothing can be more disingenuous, than, either directly or indirectly, to represent the matter in dispute between Trinitarians and Antitrinitarians, to be, whether Jesus Christ was *a man*:—or to reason as if this were, in any respect, the

* Guyse's Sermons on the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and the Divinity of the Holy Spirit; page 245. Glasgow edition, 1790.

question at issue. I do not say that it is ever formally stated in these terms; but there is a fondness frequently apparent, for mustering those passages that speak of Jesus as a man, that is apt to have an imposing effect on the mind of an unwary reader, leading him to conclude that all these declarations of his humanity are so many direct denials of his divinity. It should be remembered, however, that about the manhood of Jesus there is no dispute. It is equally admitted on both sides: and the proofs of it are as valuable to those who affirm his divinity, as to those who deny it. There were, indeed, some ancient heretics, who denied the real humanity of Jesus; who considered him as a kind of phantom, and all his sufferings as endured only in appearance. Against such, the evidence of his proper manhood might with propriety be directed; but it is worse than futile, when pointed against those, to whose system the reality of his human nature is as essential as that of his Divine. The simple and only question evidently is, not, whether Jesus Christ was *man*, but whether he was not *also God*.

Now this is a question, with regard to which, it is manifest, our appeal must be made exclusively to the sacred volume. The sole inquiry is, "What saith the Scripture?"—And in making this appeal, in prosecuting this inquiry, it is of unutterable importance, that our minds be duly impressed with the sacredness of the word of God. To wrest the Scriptures is, in the highest degree, dishonouring to their Divine Author. It is doing to Him, what is felt and resented by a fellow-creature, as one of the grossest of insults. By wilfully perverting from its true meaning (that is, from the meaning which, we are sensible, the Spirit of Truth intended it to convey,) any passage of the Word of God; or by applying it to a purpose which it was not designed to serve; we are guilty, not of a slight and venial fault, but of

a crime of deep and aggravated enormity; a crime, the very thought of which should make us tremble. It is nothing less, than imputing to the Author of Truth, sentiments contrary to what he meant to express; making the God of immutable veracity a liar; attempting to impress the seal of Heaven on falsehood and forgery. This is high treason against the Divine Majesty. It is conduct which cannot be guiltless; which cannot be safe; but which, while it is deeply criminal, must be perilous in no common degree.—Let us then beware, on this and on every other subject, of using on either side, such freedoms with the Word of the Most High God, as we should reckon it base to use with the writings of a fellow-man. For if we *do* "wrest the Scriptures," it must be, as we are assured, "to our own destruction." *

It is my intention, in this discourse, to confine myself to certain general views of the subject, which seem to contain in them very powerful evidences of the truth to be established; and afterwards to enter into a more particular examination of some of those passages of Scripture, which form the more direct and immediate proofs.

It may naturally be expected, that I should first of all justify myself in applying to Jesus Christ the words I have selected as the subject of this discourse. As the discussion of my text, however, in this view, will find a more appropriate place in next lecture, I shall, for the present, take the propriety of its application for granted; or, if you will, leave it undecided.

Let me now, then, request your attention for a little, in the first place, to the *current language of the New Testament*, relative to the important point under consideration. †

* 2 Peter iii. 16.

† It is hardly necessary to say, that the *current language* of any book, regarding any particular subject, can only mean its language *when that particular subject is spoken of, or alluded to.* When we speak of the current language of the New Testament on the subject of our blessed Lord's Divinity, we mean, that,

Before quoting the following passages, as they stand in our ordinary English translation, I must be allowed to observe, that, so far as my acquaintance with the original language enables me to judge, this translation conveys their legitimate meaning; and that I should quote them, with the very same degree of confidence as to the impression which they are fitted to produce, to an assembly of Greeks in *their* tongue, as to you, my friends, in *yours*.

" Many of the children of Israel shall he (John the Baptist) turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord:"—" In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made:"—" And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth:"—" No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven:"—" Verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am:"—" I and my Father are one:"—" I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and he that hath seen me hath seen the Father:"—" They stoned Stephen, invoking (Jesus) and saying, ' Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!—Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!' "—" Of whom, as concerning the flesh, the Christ came; who is over all God blessed for ever:"—" By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he

in many instances, his Divinity is plainly and explicitly declared, as well as that it is interwoven with the scheme of doctrine, and with the general texture of the phraseology.

is before all things; and by him all things consist:"—"Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:—and, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands:"—"To the church of God which is at Corinth,—with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"—"He knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man:"—"All the churches shall know, that I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts:"—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them:"—"Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world:"—"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me:"—"Peace be to the brethren, and love, with faith, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ:"—"Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you:"—"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us—comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work:"—"We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God, and eternal life:"—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty:"—"He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not: I am the first and the last:"—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."*

* Luke i. 16, 17. John i. 1—3. John i. 14. John iii. 13. John viii. 58. John x. 30. John xiv. 9, 10. Acts vii. 59, 60. Rom. ix. 5. Col. i. 16, 17. Heb. i. 8, 10. 1 Cor. i. 2. John ii. 24, 25. Rev. ii. 23. Matth. xviii. 20.

I have taken these passages, as they have presented themselves to my mind, without attending to any principle of arrangement. I shall afterwards have occasion, to make a selection from them, under distinct heads of argument; when some others also, both from the Old Testament and from the New, will come to be introduced.—The general question, which I have to ask at present, is this:—Is there any previous probability, that so great a number of passages, scattered throughout the Bible, and all bearing, directly, although in different ways, on the same important point, should have been, without exception, either *interpolated*, *corrupted*, or *misunderstood*?—that no critics, ancient or modern, have been sufficiently acute to discover, or sufficiently candid to admit, those manifold corruptions and interpolations, of verses and of chapters, which have been detected and exposed by the Editors of the Improved Version of the New Testament, and the friends of their system?—that all translators, into English, French, Latin, Italian, German, and other languages, have either wilfully or ignorantly erred; these editors, and other translators of their party, alone excepted?—that the whole host of interpreters of the Scriptures have, either through ignorance, or prejudice, or inattention and carelessness, totally misapprehended the true sense of these passages; except the very few, who deny that in any one of them the Divinity of Jesus Christ is at all to be found? Are such suppositions as these, I ask, when applied to so large a number of passages, in themselves probable?—or are they quite consistent, in those who make them, with any thing like a becoming measure of modesty and humility?

I have not mustered these quotations, from any idea that frequency of repetition adds any thing, strictly speaking, to

xxviii. 20. 2 Cor. xii. 7—9. Eph. vi. 23. 1 Thess. iii. 11. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. 1 John v. 20. Rev. i. 8, 17. Rev. xxii. 13.

the value of testimony. If this book be the word of the God of truth, *one express declaration* should, on any point, be sufficient to satisfy our minds. It is, at the same time, true, however, that when a doctrine is of fundamental importance, we reasonably expect that it should hold a more prominent place, than we can suppose to be given to it by a single declaration. It is also true, that the import of one passage is more liable to the possibility of mistake, than that of many; partly, from the very cause just alluded to, that when such a passage affirms a doctrine of great magnitude, its very solitude excites suspicion. On these grounds, frequency of repetition and allusion, or what may properly be termed the *general strain* of Scripture phraseology, comes to be a consideration of no trivial weight; the various passages in which a doctrine is either asserted, assumed, or alluded to, serving mutually to illustrate and support one another.

But, it may be alleged, there are other passages of Scripture, which speak a very different language from those which have been quoted:—passages, in which Jesus is spoken of as *inferior* to the Father; as *sent* by the Father; as *obeying*, and *serving* the Father; as *receiving a commission*, and executing a work, *given him to do*.—All this, we at once admit; with the very same readiness and cordiality, with which we admit his having been *a man*.—I address myself at present to those who acknowledge the Scriptures as the word of God; and who are consequently satisfied, that they cannot in reality contradict themselves. To such, on the principles which, by anticipation, were adverted to in the first discourse,—I propose the following simple question:—Which of the two views—that which asserts the *mere humanity* of Jesus Christ, or that which affirms the union of his *humanity* with true and proper *divinity*—affords the easiest and most complete reconciliation of these apparent contrarieties, and the fairest

solution of the difficulty thence arising?—Take, in the first place, the system from which the Deity of Christ is entirely excluded. I need not say how superlatively difficult the attempt must be, to bring the host of texts already quoted, along with others of a similar description, to speak a language in accordance with this hypothesis. Every one, who is at all acquainted with the subject, is aware, that the attempt has employed, and exhausted, all the possible arts and resources of criticism:—with what success, remains afterwards to be seen. Take, on the other hand, the view of the person and work of Christ, presented in the following words:—"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* *Suppose*, for the present, this translation to be correct, and the ordinary interpretation of the passage to be the just one;—we have, on this supposition, a *double view* of the person and character of Christ, which appears instantly to furnish a natural and satisfactory solution of the whole difficulty.—If he be, indeed, both God and man, we have no reason, surely, to be greatly astonished, should we find language respecting him, of seemingly opposite complexions, according as he is spoken of under the one, or under the other view, of his person. When we adopt this principle of interpretation, the apparent confusion becomes order and harmony.—If, besides, he voluntarily undertook the office of Mediator, and is represented, in the Scriptures, as performing this work in the willingly assumed capacity of a servant; there can be no doubt, that this view of his mediatorial

* Phil. ii. 6—8.

character and work does, in fact, afford a very easy and consistent interpretation of almost all the passages, in which he is spoken of as *inferior* and *subject;* as *serving* and *obeying* Jehovah; and as *receiving his reward.*—On this principle, supposing it just, we cease to wonder at the seeming contrarieties. We perceive them to be merely apparent: nay, to be such as we had every reason previously to expect.—If, then, this be a key which fits all the wards of this seemingly intricate lock, turning amongst them with hardly a touch of interruption, catching its bolts, and laying open to us, in the easiest and completest manner, the treasures of Divine truth:—if this be a principle, which, in fact, *does* produce harmony and consistency in the word of God, while the rejection of it, on the contrary, gives rise to difficulties without number; is not this, of itself, a strong presumptive evidence that the principle is correct, and well-founded?—I formerly touched on the reasonableness of this principle; and on that occasion reduced it into a general rule of interpretation, which I now repeat:—that *of two contending systems, that one ought to be preferred, which not only affords a natural explanation of those texts by which it seems to be itself supported, but, at the same time, furnishes a satisfactory principle of harmony, between these, and those other passages, which have the appearance of countenancing its opposite.*

I must now go on to state and illustrate two or three general considerations, in which the Divine dignity of Jesus Christ is evidently and strongly *implied:*—certain views, which, on any other supposition, are bereft of all their force and propriety; and appear altogether unnatural and unaccountable.

I. The first of these which I shall notice, is the view given

in the Scriptures, of *the love of God as displayed in the mission, or gift, of Jesus Christ.*—This love, as every one who knows his Bible is aware, is uniformly spoken of in terms which intimate its astonishing and unparalleled greatness. "God *so* loved the world, that *he gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life:"—"God *commendeth* his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:"—"What shall we say, then, to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? *He that spared not his own Son*, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?"—"God is love. Herein was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. *Herein is love*, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*

If Jesus Christ was merely a human prophet, commissioned to teach mankind the will of God; on what principle of interpretation are we to explain such language as this?—It is language peculiar to this one subject; unalienably appropriated to the Son of God. There had been before him, and there were after him, "holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But to no prophet, or inspired teacher, either in Old or New Testament times, do we ever find language applied, in the remotest degree analogous to this.—Why is this the case? The gratitude due to God for the instructions of his commissioned teachers must be in proportion to the importance of their respective messages; or, supposing their message to be substantially the same, to the clearness and fulness with which

* John iii. 16. Rom. v. 8. viii. 31, 32. 1 John iv. 8—10

it is delivered. If Jesus Christ is to be viewed in this simple light, as "a teacher sent from God;" if his life was only an example, and his death a confirmation of his testimony;—where shall we discover that unparalleled peculiarity of love, and whence derive that incomparably superior obligation, which the passages quoted so strongly express?—There cannot be a question, that the will of God was more clearly and fully developed by the apostles, after the day of Pentecost, than it had been by Jesus himself, during his life upon earth. Yet, when do we find any language like that which is used respecting him, applied to Peter or Paul?—although they also proved their sincerity, and sealed their testimony, with their blood?—Why is Jesus Christ characterized as God's *unspeakable gift?* Why is the love displayed in *this* gift, the pledge and assurance of every other blessing?—a pledge so precious, an assurance so decisive, as to convert into a contradiction in terms the very supposition that any other possible good should ever be withheld?—Why is it thus exhibited, as without parallel or comparison, not only amongst the creatures of God, but in the whole conduct of God himself?—Indeed, my brethren, the supposition of Jesus Christ being a man only, like ourselves,—a mere human prophet, so reduces, and neutralizes, the meaning of the expressions which have been quoted,—so totally annihilates their spirit, and beauty, and propriety; that I trust you will be disposed to say along with me, with all the emphasis of conviction, *It cannot be true.*

II. The same remark is applicable, with at least equal force, to the representations which are given, in the New Testament, of *the astonishing condescension and love of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.*

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though

he was rich, for your sakes he became poor; that ye, through his poverty might be rich!" * On repeating these words, we naturally and instantly ask, *When* was he rich *as a man?*—When he was born in the stable, and laid in the manger?—When he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head?"—At what time was he rich? and when, and how, did he become poor?—The answer of our opponents to these questions is, He *never became poor*;—the original word does not denote his passing from an antecedent state of opulence to a subsequent state of poverty; but his living in poverty, although he was, at the same time, rich:—"*While he was rich, yet, for your sakes he lived in poverty.*" †—If, for a moment overlooking the criticism, you inquire,—How was this? how was it, that, although rich, he lived a life of poverty?—the reply is—"*He was rich in miraculous powers, which it was at his option to employ for his own benefit.*" ‡—"Miraculous powers, which it was at his option to employ for his own benefit!"—What a strange supposition is this! What! a prophet of the Most High, with miraculous, that is, with almighty power, at his own disposal, to use, as he may incline, for promoting his own wealth, and honour, and aggrandisement! Divine power transferred to a creature! subjected to the will and pleasure of a mere man—a "fallible and peccable man," §—"a man in all respects like other men, except in being selected by Divine wisdom to be the messenger of truth and mercy to mankind!" ‖—Such transference of Divine power, I would, in the first place, remark, is a natural impossibility. The

* 2 Cor. viii. 9. † See Improved Version of the New Testament.

‡ Belsham's Calm Inquiry, page 126. The words of the Editors of the Improved Version are to the same effect: "Our Lord was rich in miraculous powers, which he could employ, if he pleased, to his own advantage." Note on the text.

§ Priestley. ‖ Belsham.

might which effects the miracle resides in God alone. It never can belong to the creature. And residing, as it must, in God alone, it can never be exerted to gratify the will of a creature, who would pervert it to a selfish purpose, or to any purpose different from that which he is commissioned to accomplish, and for the accomplishment and vindication of which the interposition of the power is pledged. The contrary supposition is pregnant with consequences the most serious and fatal. It destroys the certainty of the evidence of miracles; and thus subverts one of the main pillars on which the truth of Christianity rests. For, if miraculous power was at all a *discretionary* power, lodged in the hands and placed at the will of its possessor, to be used for any purpose he pleased;—then, what security have we, that it has, in every instance, been used agreeably to the design for which it was bestowed?—always in support of truth, and never of error?—always for the accomplishment of Divine, and never of selfish ends?—The very expression that it was "*at his option*" how he should employ this power,—at the option of a man like ourselves, subject to the perverting influence of human infirmities and human passions;—supposes the possibility of the one, as well as of the other: and thus a miracle, however fully ascertained, ceases to be a conclusive evidence of truth, or a certain indication of the Divine will.—I satisfy myself with this observation for the present. If the *principle* be wrong on which the interpretation of our opponents is founded, the interpretation itself cannot be right. The text will come into notice again.—Meantime, consider, how full it is of beauty and of force, when referred to Him, who, although rich as the great creator and sovereign proprietor of the universe, became poor in the assumption of our nature, making no use, in that nature, of those riches which were all his own, but "humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!"

—This is GRACE indeed!—Grace that shall be the theme, the worthy theme, of everlasting song!

Further: on the hypothesis of our opponents, what shall we make of the following language? Paul, in praying for the Ephesian believers, expresses himself thus:—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith! that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge!*" *—What, I say, are we to make of this? If Jesus Christ was a mere human prophet, who, having fulfilled his prophetic commission, attested the truth of it by his death;—where is this marvellous, this unexampled love?—this love of which the limits cannot be measured?—which has a height and depth, a breadth and length, exceeding all comprehension?—Differences there may be between this man and other men,—between this prophet and other prophets; but no differences can there be, of sufficient magnitude to justify such expressions as these. On the supposition in question, this language is entirely out of nature:—we cannot go along with it:—it violates every sentiment of propriety:—it is the mere rhapsody of admiration; the unmeaning bombast of eulogy.

III. With this last observation is closely connected, *the depth of interest, the warmth of admiring transport, and adoring gratitude, with which the contemplation of this subject inspired the hearts of the New Testament writers.*—The thought of the love of Christ, and of the love of God in Christ, as displayed in the humiliation and sufferings of the Saviour, sets their hearts on fire. The very mention of it,—even an incidental allusion to it, carries away their feelings, and fills them with

* Ephes. iii. 17—19.

the loftiest, the sublimest emotions:—with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."—"What shall we, then, say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall God who justifieth?—Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ who died, yea rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (as it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter:) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life; nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers; nor things present, nor things to come; nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" *—Whence these glowing transports? Whence this celestial elevation of spirit? Why does the thought of "Christ crucified," animate the souls of these writers with such exulting triumph, and bind them to their Saviour and Lord, with such fervent and resolute attachment? "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him!" †—Take away the view of his condescension and grace apparent in his assuming our nature, to suffer and die for the redemption of the lost; and such transports

* Rom. viii. 31—39. † Phil. iii. 7—9.

become mere passion, without reason. But admit this view; and all is natural:—the cause is adequate to the effect; the effect fully justified by the transcendent grandeur of the cause.

IV. Another of those general considerations to which I solicit your attention is, *the account given in the New Testament of the exaltation of Jesus, at the right hand of God.*—This exaltation is represented as the consequence, and the reward, of his finished work. Let one passage suffice, as a description of its glory:—"He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places; far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet; and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who filleth all in all."*—The nature of this delegated power, with the ground and principle of its delegation, we shall have occasion afterwards to illustrate; and to show that the exercise of it necessarily implies the possession of Divine perfections. The question which I wish to impress upon your minds at present, is this:—If Jesus Christ was a mere human prophet, who was sent to teach the will of God, and who fell a martyr to the truth; why this strange distinction? Why is *this* prophet thus singled out, and invested with glory, above the highest archangel; and with all power and authority in heaven and in earth? That he might be superior, even eminently superior, although a mere man, to other prophets and servants of Jehovah, we can very readily conceive. But is not the height of glory, on this supposition, out of all proportion to the superiority of the service? Do not we feel, as if Isaiah, and Peter, and Paul,

* Eph. i. 20—23.

were kept too low? *They* thought not so:—*they* felt not so. But why? Because they viewed him, who was the great subject of their predictions and of their testimony, as, in personal dignity, and in important commission, infinitely their superior;—one to whose condescension and grace, they were themselves unutterably indebted;—and whom they considered it as *their* highest honour, to serve, and to celebrate.—The following words, before alluded to, assign the true cause, and it is an all-sufficient and satisfying one, of the height of glory and honour, dominion and power, to which Jesus is raised:—"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. WHEREFORE God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*—Here is the genuine reason, plainly and explicitly stated; and here, all is proportion and propriety. It is *right* and *suitable*, that He who *thus* humbled himself should be *thus* exalted. It is *right*, that he who stooped so low should be raised so high:—that he who assumed our nature in a low estate, should exhibit in that nature his heavenly majesty:—that he who redeemed men should reign over them:—that he who "endured the cross, despising the shame," should occupy the throne, and be "crowned with glory and honour." All who know and feel his grace, are disposed, with one heart and one soul, to sing,—

* Phil. ii. 6—11.

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father,—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!"—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"*

V. The last of these general considerations which I shall mention, is *the high claims of Jesus on the love and obedience of his followers.*

To all the prophets of God, the commissioned ambassadors of Heaven, as to fellow-creatures, who have been the instruments of much good to us, at the expense of much self-denial and suffering to themselves, we certainly ought to feel a warm and grateful attachment.—But what mere human prophet ever addressed the people to whom he was sent, in such terms as the following?—"He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me:"—"If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."—"If any man serve me, let him follow me: and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."†—Who can this be, who advances claims so high, on the love, and service, and obedience of his hearers?—who, in terms so unqualified, appropriates their attachment; and is not afraid of dividing their hearts between himself and the Father that sent him?—If the speaker was indeed what *we* affirm him to have been, the language is suitable to the

* Rev. i. 5, 6. v. 12.

† Matth. x. 37, 38. Luke xiv. 26. John xii. 26.

person; we are sensible of no incongruity between them; but are, on the contrary, awed to silence by the dignified authority, and won to compliance by the mild benignity of his address. But if he was a human prophet merely, on a level in nature with the disciples and the multitudes to whom he spoke, every feeling of fitness and propriety is outraged: the language has no parallel in the history of the discharge of prophetic commissions: it is the language of unexampled presumption.—Yet these high claims were felt and owned by his followers to be just. Love to Christ became the grand moving spring of Christian activity: "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again."*—Love to Christ was a prominent and distinguishing feature of the Christian character: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!"† —The want of this love incurred a heavy curse: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha!"‡—How destitute of reason, I repeat, are such expressions, if Jesus was a mere human prophet! The obligation to such supreme love, with all its various expressions, we find it impossible, on this supposition, to bring ourselves to feel; either on account of what he is, or on account of what he hath done. We must qualify the language,—we must dilute its strength and pungency to such a degree, as to render it a most unnatural vehicle of the sentiment it was designed to express, before we can bring it at all within the bounds of moderation and propriety.—But view Jesus Christ as IMMANUEL—GOD WITH US;—the atoning Redeemer of a lost world:—and all is as it ought to be. The strongest terms

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. † Eph. vi. 24. ‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

that can be selected, are not then too strong to express his claims on our attachment; his title to the entire surrender of our hearts and powers to his service:—nor is eternity itself too long to celebrate his praise. The contemplation of *what he is*, and of *what he hath done*, disposes us, with all the ardour of a grateful and adoring heart, to join in the song of heaven —a song, indeed, in which all creation is represented as uniting:—"BLESSING, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, BE UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB, FOR EVER AND EVER! AMEN!"*

The considerations which I have thus briefly illustrated, appear to my mind to contain in them very powerful presumptive, and more than presumptive, evidence, against the hypothesis which makes Jesus a mere man, or a mere creature. They fully and strongly harmonize with that which maintains his divinity; and, by harmonizing with it, give it support and confirmation. Although, therefore, they are such as to excite the warmth of feeling, they are far from being out of place in an argumentative discussion. I am quite aware, that the warmth with which I have spoken of them will be deemed excessive and enthusiastic by all within the polar circle of Unitarianism. But while I am satisfied, that the religious affections should have their origin in an enlightened understanding,—enthusiasm being heat without light, or the movement of the passions in a degree disproportionate to the illumination of the mind, or to the magnitude of the subject which it contemplates;—yet I know not, at the same time, what religion is, without feeling; and the sole question should be, are the representations which I have now been laying before you scriptural? If they are, are they not in their

* Rev. v. 13.

nature calculated to move, and to move powerfully, the affections and passions of the human soul?—Did not the contemplation of them produce this effect upon the writers themselves? Have not *they* given indulgence to the emotions of a glowing heart, in communicating to others the truths which so "effectually wrought" in their own bosoms? And was it not their intention, or rather the intention of the Holy Spirit, under whose influence they wrote, that their readers should not merely perceive their meaning in the truths which they expressed, but catch the same holy ardour which these truths kindled within them?

The glowing attachment of the apostles and primitive Christians to their crucified Master, has been compared to the veneration displayed, in subsequent times, for the memory of the martyrs; and the attempt has been made to account for it on the same principles.—But the cases are as far as possible from being parallel. Whence, I would ask, arose the veneration for the martyrs? In as far as it was at all legitimate, did it not spring from the very relation of these holy men to Jesus Christ, the great object of Christian gratitude, and from the invincible love which they showed to him by enduring tortures, and sacrificing their lives in his cause? The martyrs themselves, and those who venerated their memories, viewed HIM in a higher character than that of a mere fellow-martyr, who had evinced his sincerity, by submitting to death rather than retract his testimony. *His* blood was the blood of atonement;—of the great expiatory sacrifice;—of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." And it was faith in *his* blood, as an accepted propitiation, that sustained the martyrs, while they nobly suffered their own to be shed;—parting cheerfully with life, even when the death which deprived them of it was inflicted by excruciating agonies, because the haters of their Master would not suffer

them to retain it, except on the condition of renouncing his cross, and forswearing their fealty to his name.—It has been alleged, that the respect and veneration shown to the memories of the martyrs was the same *in kind* with that shown by the apostles and early Christians to the name and memory of Jesus, only *lower in degree*;—that Jesus was viewed by them simply as a martyr of a higher order; the principal difference being, that he was the "*author*" (i. e. the *first* messenger to mankind) of that doctrine, for their adherence to which the subsequent martyrs bled. But no. Could these holy men have been made sensible that the veneration paid to them rested on similar grounds with that paid to their blessed Redeemer and Lord, it would have stirred their very bones in the graves at which their votaries assembled.—Regard to the memories of these witnesses to the truth degenerated, in days of darkness, into a superstitious, idolatrous, and idiotical veneration for broken pieces of stone and wood, for sacred dust and "canonized bones," and all the holy relics of martyrology. While we would avoid this stupid extreme, we would also deprecate running into its opposite. Not to revere the names of those who have bled for Christ, who "have not counted their lives dear unto themselves;" not to consecrate them in our memories, and embalm them in the affections of our hearts, were surely to forfeit every claim to Christian sensibility. But still, this reverence must be different, not only in *degree*, but in *kind*, from the reverence which we feel and cherish towards the name of that Redeemer, whose body was broken and whose blood was shed for us. When we take our seats at his table, do we "*remember him*" merely as the great *proto-martyr* in the cause of Christian truth? Is he not brought before our contemplation in a more sublime and peculiar character?—as atoning on the cross for the sins of a guilty world? Yes; and it was this view of the

cross that animated the martyrs themselves, in the trial of fire, and the baptism of blood. It was the remembrance of *his* "cup of trembling" that took the bitterness out of theirs. It was his sprinkled blood that allayed the fury of the devouring flames. It was "peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" it was acceptance through the merits of his obedience and sacrifice, that elevated their souls to all the triumph of hope, at the cross, the gibbet, and the stake. Shall we honour, then, with the same *kind* of veneration, the Saviour and the saved?—the believer and the object of his faith?—the martyr and the martyr's Lord?—the expiring saint, and the living Redeemer to whom he commends *his* departing spirit?—No: the glory of Christ is his own, and can never be shared with another. In contemplating the cruel deaths of the martyrs, we admire the firmness of faith, the fervour of love, and the sublimity of self-devotion; but still we say, and we are animated by their example to say, "God forbid that we should GLORY, save in THE CROSS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!" We revere the names of the martyrs; but there is "ONE NAME alone, under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved."—At the stake of the martyr we view, with wondering interest, the energy of holy principle, and breathe a prayer for the mantle of Elijah; but at the cross of Christ, we smite upon our breasts, and say, "God be propitious to me a sinner!" We are abased to dust, and elevated to hope;—we trust, and we adore.

And is it not a presumption against any system, that its advocates appear so jealous of emotions which the sacred writers themselves indulged?—That the views which they entertain of the same points, instead of kindling the fervour of devotional feeling, serve rather to "freeze the genial current of the soul," and oblige them to exert all their ingenuity in finding out plausible reasons for their anti-devotional

coolness, and the phlegmatic temperament of their boasted *rationality*?

My dear friends, if the subject of which I have been speaking were a matter of mere abstract speculation, I should reckon myself ill employed in touching it in public at all;—far more so, in entering into any detailed discussion of it. Such themes as these become not him, whose office calls him to

> " ——— negotiate between God and man,
> ——————— the high concerns
> Of judgment and of mercy——————."

—But feeling, as I do, my own hopes for eternity at stake, with the doctrine whose truth it is my object to vindicate; and satisfied, that *your* hopes must rest on the same foundation—(for if this be the right one, there is not another);—I cannot but feel it my duty, to press it upon your most serious and earnest attention.—In next discourse, I intend, if God shall give ability and opportunity to prosecute the subject, to enter on the direct proofs, that the peculiar NAMES, ATTRIBUTES, WORKS, and WORSHIP of the true God, are distinctly ascribed in the Bible to Jesus Christ. And all that I request of you, is a patient and candid hearing; and a seriousness becoming the high importance of the point under discussion.

As to any practical improvement of what has been delivered in this discourse, I have only to say, (for it would be quite unseasonable to enlarge,) that if the spirit of the different Scripture quotations, expressive of Christian principles and Christian feelings, in the latter part of the discourse, be imbibed, and cherished, and practically displayed—this will be of all effects the most desirable; the most conducive to your happiness, and to the glory of God our Saviour.—May He graciously grant this effect, for his name's sake! Amen!

DISCOURSE IV.

ON THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

1 JOHN v. 20.

"——*his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God.*"

HAVING called your attention, in last discourse, to certain general, but to my mind highly interesting and important views, of this momentous subject, I shall defer recapitulation for the present, as it is my intention to give a brief summary of the whole evidence, when I have brought my illustration of it to a close:—and shall now immediately proceed, agreeably to the method which I announced, to lay before you such direct proofs as appear to me most conclusive, that the NAMES AND TITLES, the ATTRIBUTES, the WORKS, and the WORSHIP, belonging exclusively to the true God, are expressly, and without qualification, ascribed, in the Scriptures, to Jesus Christ.

This is a field so very extensive, that I should feel myself fully justified, in devoting to each of the four divisions of it a distinct discourse.—It is not my design, however, to enter thus minutely into detail. I mean not to bring forward into prominent view, every particular which might, with propriety, be illustrated; nor to adduce, on those particulars which *are* brought forward, every text which might fairly be cited;—nor even on the texts which are adduced, to say all that, with strict relation to the subject, might be said. With some of these texts, indeed, there are connected certain minute critical discussions, which to a popular auditory could hardly be made

clearly intelligible; and which could not therefore, be introduced without palpable impropriety, and without an appearance of pedantry, and of ostentatious display, such as ought, on all occasions, to be sedulously shunned. Such discussions I shall, therefore, as much as possible avoid.—It is, besides, my object, to abridge, and to concentrate, rather than to present a full and extended view of the subject:—not to collect all the scattered light that could possibly be brought to bear upon it; but to catch a few of the more powerful and vivid rays, and to draw them into a focus;—to present the argument in a condensed, and, I would humbly hope, also in a somewhat luminous point of view.

I. Let me begin, then, with the NAMES and TITLES peculiar to Deity.

And here, agreeably to the plan of *selection* which I have prescribed to myself, I shall confine your attention to the two most obvious and important of these,—GOD and JEHOVAH.

1. We argue, that Jesus Christ is called GOD, in the absolute or unqualified sense of the name, in the following, amongst other passages of Scripture.

1*st*, The text itself.—The whole verse runs thus:—"*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this (or he) is the true God, and eternal life.*"—I am quite aware of the ambiguity arising here, from the appearance of a *double antecedent.* By "*him that is true,*" it is said, we are to understand *the Father:* and to this appellation, which is the remote antecedent, the expression "*this is the true God*" may refer, as well as to "*his Son Jesus Christ,*" which is the immediate antecedent.

On this subject, let me request your attention to the following brief remarks.—It is the established *general rule,*

that the personal, or the demonstrative pronoun, should be considered as referring to the *immediate antecedent*.—To this general rule there are two cases of exception: 1*st*, When obvious and indisputable necessity requires the contrary.*—But in the instance in our text, no such necessity can be pleaded, except on the *previous assumption* of the certainty that Jesus Christ *is not* the true God. Were this antecedently demonstrated, it might justify a deviation from ordinary practice. But to proceed on such an assumption, is to beg the question in dispute.—2*dly*, When the immediate antecedent holds no prominent place in the sentence, but is introduced only incidentally, the remote being obviously the chief subject, having the entire, or greatly preponderating emphasis, in the mind of the writer.—It requires only the reading of the verse, to satisfy any candid mind, that this is not the case here; and that no reason exists on *this* ground, for any departure from the general rule. The Son of God stands *first* and *last* in the part of the verse which precedes our text.

These observations are not at all affected by the difference

* Thus, when Peter, addressing the Jewish council, respecting the man that had been cured of his lameness, says, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,—even by him, doth this man stand here before you whole. *This* is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is now become the head of the corner:" Acts iv. 10, 11.—no one ever imagines, that, because the lame man is the immediate antecedent, "*This is the stone*" must be interpreted as referring to *him*.—The same *impossibility of mistake* exists, as to the reference of the demonstrative pronoun, in the following verse of the second epistle of John:—"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. *This* is a deceiver, and an antichrist."—In showing that the pronoun in the words of our text should be understood as referring to the remote antecedent, Mr. Belsham introduces this latter passage, and he mentions no other, as "*a similar case!*" Of the degree of parallelism, and of the candour evinced in such a reference, I may safely leave the reader to form his own judgment.—Belsham's Calm Inquiry into the Scripture doctrine concerning the person of Christ; pp. 232, 233.

in the translation of the verse, as given by our opponents in their "Improved Version of the New Testament." They render the words thus: "and we are in him that is true, *through* his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and everlasting life:"—a translation to which I should not be disposed to make any very material objection; and in which, it is obvious, the relative positions of antecedents and pronouns remain unaltered.

On the supposition that the words "*this is the true God*" refer not to "*Jesus Christ*," the immediate, but to "*him that is true*," the remote antecedent; and that the translation "*through* his Son Jesus Christ," is correct; we are tempted to ask, Was there any occasion for the explanation? Could it ever have entered into the imagination of any reader, that in the sentence "*we are in Him that is true, through his Son Jesus Christ*," the apostle could mean by "*him that is true*" any one else than the true God? Is it very likely, think you, that after speaking of "*Him that is true*," in a connexion where Jesus Christ is represented as "*his Son*," he would feel it necessary to subjoin the explanation,—"*He that is true is the true God?*" And can that principle of interpretation be just, which thus renders the apostle's explanation pleonastic and nugatory?

Another circumstance which, in my mind, places the matter beyond dispute, is, that *the same person* is plainly and unequivocally spoken of, as "*the true God*, and ETERNAL LIFE." It will be granted, that a writer is the best interpreter of his own phraseology. Observe, then, the expressions which he uses in the beginning of the epistle: "THE LIFE *was manifested, and we have seen it, and show unto you that* ETERNAL LIFE, *which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.*" In these words, it is admitted by Socinians themselves, that "*the eternal life*," or, as they render

it "*the Everlasting Life*," is a title given to Jesus Christ.*—Compare, then, the two passages. Is not the conclusion of the Epistle a clear explanation of its beginning? "*We show unto you* THE ETERNAL LIFE, *which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.*"—"*We are in him that is true, even in his Son*"—or, (for it makes no difference as to the present argument) "*through his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and* THE ETERNAL LIFE."† Is not this as if the Apostle had said, "This is he of whom I spoke in the commencement of my letter: *He* is THE LIFE, the ETERNAL LIFE, whom I then mentioned, as the great subject of apostolic testimony?" —Now if *this* designation, which follows the words of the text, is clearly meant of Jesus Christ, the immediate antecedent; so, beyond all reasonable dispute, must the title in the text itself. The *same person* is most undeniably affirmed to be "THE TRUE GOD and THE ETERNAL LIFE."

If any thing further were necessary to confirm what appears so incontrovertible, it might be noticed, that THE LIFE is a title appropriated to Jesus, in other parts of Scripture; and chiefly (which adds strength to the conclusion respecting the passage in question) in the writings of this same apostle. "I am the way, the truth, and THE LIFE:"—"I am the Resurrection and THE LIFE:" "THE LIFE was the light of men."

To the words of our text, there is immediately subjoined an admonition against idolatry:—"Little children, keep your-

* "Life, and, in the next clause, Everlasting Life. Christ is so called as the great teacher of everlasting life."—Improved Version of the New Testament; note on the place.—It is not with the *explanation* of the title that we have at present to do, but simply with the admission of its being a designation of Jesus Christ; an admission distinctly made in this note, and made, indeed, both in it and in the text, by the printing of the words "the Everlasting Life" with initial capitals.

† Ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν ΤΗΝ ΖΩΗΝ ΤΗΝ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΝ, ἥτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα,—κ. τ. λ. ——— οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς καὶ Η ΖΩΗ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΣ.

selves from idols." The connexion in which this admonition is introduced, is an additional proof that our interpretation of the preceding verse is correct. For, as an eminent writer most justly observes, "it is very unlikely, that the Apostle "John should conclude his epistle with such a solemn charge "against idolatry, or the worshipping of that which is not "God, and yet, in the foregoing verse, leave his expression "concerning the true God, so easily and so naturally to be "interpreted concerning Jesus Christ, if *he* were not the "true God." *

2d. John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and THE WORD WAS GOD."

That "THE WORD," in whatever way we choose to translate the original term which is so rendered,—whether we retain this rendering, or give the preference to WISDOM, or REASON, —is here to be understood as a designation of Jesus Christ, is so incontrovertibly clear, that I should reckon it ill-spent time, to argue with any one who could be so disingenuous as to question it.—The whole of the subsequent context shows it; in which the same glorious person continues to be spoken of, in different views, and under different appellations, till it is said of him, in the 14th verse, "and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."—The application of the title to Christ is, besides, more than justified,—it is put beyond all controversy, by the use of it elsewhere, in the writings of this same apostle. He thus commences his first epistle:—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of THE WORD OF LIFE:"—and the similarity

* Dr. Watts' "Christian Doctrine of the Trinity." Works, Vol. v. p. 19.

between the opening of the epistle and the introduction to the Gospel is so striking, as to leave no doubt in any considerate and candid mind, whether "*the Word*" in the latter means the same person with "*the Word of Life*," in the former.—The same appropriation of the title to Christ appears, in one of those sublime visions described by this apostle in the book of Revelation; where the Redeemer is introduced, marked by designations and characters which preclude the possibility of mistake:—"I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse: and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written which no man knew but he himself: and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called THE WORD OF GOD." * †

Supposing it, then, to be admitted, that "the Word" here does not mean an *attribute*, or an *abstract quality* personified, but *a person*; and that this person is Jesus Christ:—we affirm, that the verse contains a plain and express declaration of his true and proper Divinity.—"*The Word was God.*"

To take off the force and conclusiveness of this proof, it has been alleged, that as the name of "*God*" in this clause has not the *definite article* prefixed to it in the Greek, ‡ the clause itself might, or even ought to be rendered, not *absolutely*, "the Word WAS GOD," but, agreeably to a subordinate sense in which the word *God*, we are reminded, is sometimes used in Scripture,—"the Word was A GOD."

Some of you, who are not accustomed to this sort of criticism, will probably feel a little startled by such a mode of expression, in the place where it is thus represented as occur-

* Rev. xix. 11—13. † See Note C.

‡ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος.

ring:—and certainly well you may. The supposition is, indeed, a very strange one—that in a book, an inspired book, of which it is one of the leading designs, to assert and establish the existence, dominion, and worship, of one God, in opposition to all idols and idolatry, one of the writers, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, should begin his portion of it with the very language of paganism;—with language so evidently calculated to mislead his readers; so favourable, in the first impression which it necessarily makes upon the mind, to the notion of a supreme and subordinate deities.

But the truth is, this writer *has not so expressed himself.* There is not even ambiguity in his language. He has asserted the absolute proposition, "*the Word was God,*" in the only terms in which he could have asserted it, in this simple form, without grammatical impropriety.

It has been observed, by different critics, that in the sentence in question, *God* is what grammarians term the *predicate of the proposition*:—that is—*the Word* is the *subject* spoken of; and that which is *predicated*, or affirmed, concerning it is, "the Word *was God.*" Now in these circumstances, the article is, agreeably to the ordinary rules of Greek syntax, properly *rejected.*—Had the article been prefixed to "*God,*" the more natural meaning of the sentence would have been, "God was the Word," a proposition essentially different:—or, at the very least, the proposition would, by such a construction, have assumed a convertible form; and the meaning have been rendered quite ambiguous. *

But why dwell on these general principles of syntax, when in the very context itself we have ample evidence before us of the unsoundness of the objection? It is truly wonderful, that any critic should have ventured to occupy such ground, if he

* See Middleton on the Greek article, pp. 342, 343, and 455—464.

had read the first eighteen verses of this chapter, and was desirous of preserving his reputation for candour.—Those who understand the original already know, and those who do not may be assured of the fact, that, in the instances I am now about to quote from the subsequent context, the word *God* stands precisely in the same circumstances, with regard to the absence of the article, as in its occurrence in the clause of the first verse, which we are now examining.—Ver. 6. "There was a man sent *from God*, * whose name was John:" Ver. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become *the sons of God*:" † Ver. 13. "Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*:" ‡ Ver. 18. "No man *hath seen God* § at any time."—In all these instances, the name of GOD is evidently used in its primary and unqualified acceptation: yet in no one of them is it accompanied with the article. Are we then to render these verses, according to the principle adopted for the translation of the first verse,—"There was a man sent from *a God*"—"to them gave he power to become sons of *a God*"—"who were born—*of a God*"—"No man hath seen *a God* at any time?"—This is not pretended. Why, then, is this mode of translation to be adopted in the first verse, when it is evidently in opposition to the practice of the writer in the immediate context; and, what is more, when the word occurs in circumstances, which, according to the ordinary rules of Greek syntax, ascertain it to be used in its unqualified sense, even more decidedly than in any of the other occurrences of it, which have been quoted?—Is it fair, ingenuous, and manly, in our opponents, to conceal from the view of the unlearned reader, a circumstance so important, and to themselves so obvious and well known, as the practice of the writer, with

* Παρὰ Θεοῦ. † Τέκνα Θεοῦ. ‡ Ἐκ Θεοῦ. § Θεὸν ἑώρακε.

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respect to the use of the same word, in the immediate context; and to apply to the first verse a principle of interpretation, which they never think of applying to the others? Has not this too much the appearance of bringing the text to the system, rather than the system to the text?

That the word *God* is sometimes used, in the Scriptures, in an inferior sense, is by no means denied. The occurrences of it in this sense, however, (as applied, for instance, to angels and to magistrates,) are very rare; and they are uniformly in such circumstances as at once to preclude the possibility of any pernicious mistake. "I said, ye are gods:"—"Worship him, all ye gods:"—"God standeth in the congregation of the mighty, he ruleth among the gods." who was ever misled by such phrases as these, into idolatry, and polytheism? No difficulty is felt. The mind of the reader is left perfectly easy and unembarrassed. Are these, then, to be considered as parallel expressions to one, which, if the Unitarian interpretation of it be just, has actually misled into false confidence, and idolatrous worship, ninety-nine hundredths of the professing Christian world?

The same observation is applicable, in its full force, to another view of the text before us, which although not the one usually given of it by Unitarian writers, is adopted by some of them, and must not be entirely overlooked. Dissatisfied with the translation, "the Word was *a God*," and sensible, it should seem, of the force of those considerations, by which the word *God* is shown to be used in its proper and unqualified sense, they admit that it should be so understood: but the meaning of the expression is not, say they, that Jesus Christ was himself truly God, but that, as the great prophet of the Most High, he was *in the room of God*, the *representative of God* to mankind.—The only passage on which this interpretation is founded, as a parallel case, is what God says to

Moses in the first verse of the seventh chapter of the book of Exodus: "See, I have made thee GOD (not *a God*, as it is rendered in our translation) I have made thee GOD to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." I have no doubt, that the true meaning of this expression is the same with that of the 16th verse of the 4th chapter of the same book, where God says to Moses respecting Aaron, "he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him *instead of God*."—But is this expression, I ask, in which a person acknowledged, on all hands, to have been a mere human prophet, is spoken of, in an address by Jehovah himself, as *made*, or *appointed* God, to a particular individual, on a particular occasion, and for a specific design, to be considered as parallel to the one before us, in which, without the application of a single restrictive term, and without the smallest hint that should lead to the idea of representation or vicegerency, it is simply affirmed, that "*the Word* WAS GOD?" —For my own part, I can hardly bring myself to conceive how any one can assert the parallelism of the two cases, who is not searching for support, which he finds extremely scanty, to a preconceived and favourite opinion.

At verse 14th of this chapter, to which allusion has already been made, it is said: "The Word *was made flesh—or became flesh*—and dwelt among us—full of grace and truth."—By those who deny the Divinity and pre-existence of Jesus, these words are rendered, "*and* (or *nevertheless*) *the Word was flesh*." —They do not deny, that the verb which they translate *was*, does frequently signify *to become*; but the most general signification of it, they remind us, is *to be*. *Flesh*, again they say, is often used generically for *man*; and peculiarly for man considered as mortal; which no one certainly will be disposed to question.—Now since, according to them, "THE WORD" also means *a man*, even the man Christ Jesus, who had no

existence otherwise than as a man, the amount of import in these words is, that the man Christ Jesus, "the first preacher of the gospel, although honoured with such signal tokens of Divine confidence and favour, and although invested with so high an office, was nevertheless a man, a *mortal man.*"* I think I may, with perfect safety, leave this, without comment, to your own understandings. It is a proposition, which, if Jesus Christ *had* been a mere man, it does not seem very likely, that the Evangelist would have thought of thus formally announcing; and if he had, it requires only a comparison of his words, with the commentary of our opponents, to satisfy you, that they are not the terms which of all others he was most likely to choose, for expressing the idea which it is supposed to have been his intention to convey. To a candid reader, I think, it must also be sufficiently obvious, that the Word's *becoming flesh*, or *man*, is represented as taking place, *in order to* his dwelling amongst men on the earth.†

3*d*. The two expressions "*the Word was God*," and "*the Word became flesh*," when taken together, accord precisely with other passages of Scripture, in which he is denominated GOD, in the very same kind of connexion.—To give one example: Isaiah ix. 6. "For unto us *a child is born*, unto us *a son is given*:—and his name shall be called—the *mighty God*."—That this passage is a prophecy of the Messiah, there can be no reasonable doubt. Without entering into any critical discussion of this point, I would merely observe, that the authority of the New Testament Scriptures, in which parts of the immediate context are expressly applied to Christ, should be sufficient to determine it. The language of the first two verses of the chapter is quoted by the evangelist Matthew, as

* Cappe, as quoted in the Note of the Improved Version.—Mr. Belsham's interpretation is the same, Calm Inquiry, pp. 38, 39.

† See Note D.

receiving the beginning of its fulfilment in the opening of our Saviour's ministry, when he took up his residence in Capernaum, "in the borders of Zabulon and of Nephthalim;" which places are particularly specified in the prophecy:—and to the terms of the seventh verse—"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, on the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever"—there is an obvious reference in the words of the Angel to Mary, Luke i. 31—33. "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—The terms, indeed, of the entire description, in the prophecy, of the expected child, are such as to exclude every other application of them, and to leave no doubt, in any considerate and candid mind, of the Messiah being the subject.

I have at present to do only with the particular designation, —"the mighty GOD."—And for a clear proof of the true import of this title, we need go no further than to the twenty-first verse of the following chapter, where it is said—"The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto THE MIGHTY GOD"—where the words are precisely the same. In that connexion, there can be no question, it is a distinctive and peculiar designation of supreme Godhead; and no consistent or satisfactory reason can be assigned, why it should not be so understood in the application of it now before us.—The same word for God occurs in various other instances, in the same order of collocation with other adjectives:—and although the word rendered *God*, and the word rendered *mighty*,

might each, by itself, admit of an inferior application, yet the two when taken together (and in the present instance they cannot be separated without the most unnatural force, and in defiance of their plain meaning in the next chapter) form a designation of Jehovah as peculiar and exclusive as when he is called the MIGHTY ONE of Israel; where the epithet mighty, though it be true that *might* is predicable of creatures, is, from its connexion equivalent in amount to AL-mighty.*

4th. Rom. ix. 5.—"Of whom, (the Israelites) *as concerning the flesh*, the Christ came, *who is over all*, GOD, *blessed for ever.*"†

This seems abundantly plain:—so plain, and so decisive, that if there were not another text in the Bible directly affirming this great truth, I know not how I should satisfy myself in rejecting its explicit testimony.—It has, accordingly, been put upon the rack, to make it speak, by dint of torture, a different language.

It might, perhaps, be enough to say, respecting this passage, that, according to the order of the original words, the received translation is the most *direct* and *natural* rendering. This, so far as I know, no one has ventured to deny. All that has been affirmed is, that, it is *capable of bearing* a different sense. And this has accordingly, been attempted, in no fewer than five different ways:—

"Of whom, by natural descent, the Christ came. God, who is over all, be blessed for ever!"‡

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom—the Christ came, who is above them all (viz. the fathers). God be blessed for ever!"

* See Note E.

† I give the Greek here, for the sake of easy reference to it in what follows:—
——ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς, τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς, εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

‡ Placing the full stop after σάρκα.

"Of whom the Christ came, who is over all things. God be blessed for ever!"*

"Of whom the Christ came, who is *as* God, over all, blessed for ever:"†—and, by a conjectural emendation,

"Of whom the Christ came, (and) whose, or of whom, is the supreme God, blessed for ever."‡

With regard to the last of these various modes of evading this troublesome text, the severest terms of reprobation are not too strong.—*Conjectural alteration* of the original text, is an expedient which, all critics are agreed, nothing but indispensable necessity can, in any case, justify. In the present instance, the alteration is not only a most unwarrantable liberty with the sacred text, but, even if on this ground it were admissible, it is liable to other objections, on principles both of syntax, and of propriety as to sense.—These, however, it is needless to state; because the emendation itself, although still suggested as in its nature "most happy and plausible," and spoken of in terms that show evident reluctance to part with it,§ is acknowledged to be unsupported by a single manuscript, version, or authority, and is not insisted on. I must be allowed, however, to add, without questioning the *ingenuity* of its inventor, that its *plausibility* can only be felt by a mind strongly prepossessed in favour of the meaning which it is designed to support.

The translation, again, which qualifies the meaning of the term *God*, and, to mark its being used in an inferior sense, introduces a particle that has nothing corresponding to it in

* In this and the preceding, the full stop is placed after ἐπὶ πάντων.

† The received punctuation is retained.

‡ Ὢν, ὁ is the conjectured reading here for ὁ ὤν.

§ "This conjecture, ingenious, and even probable as it is, not being supported by a single manuscript, version, or authority, cannot be admitted into the text. But one may almost believe, that the present reading might be owing to an inadvertence in one of the earliest transcribers, if not in the Apostle's own Amanuensis."—Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 224.

the original—"who is *as* God, over all, blessed for ever;"—is so completely gratuitous, so totally unwarranted by any thing that bears the remotest resemblance to principle; nay, so directly inconsistent with that ascription of supremacy and of eternal blessing, which is, in the very verse, connected with the name; that I should not have thought of mentioning it, had it not been for the sake of showing, to what shifts a critic, even of eminent talents,* may be reduced, when, rejecting the plain and obvious meaning of a text, he is, at the same time, desirous to strike out something new, and to give it a turn that is original, and peculiar to himself.

I mention it also, indeed, as being a sufficiently convincing evidence, that this critic did not feel himself satisfied with the other expedient, adopted by his friends in general, which, by altering the punctuation, would convert the latter part of the verse into a doxology, or ascription of praise.—And it is not to be wondered at, that he should have felt this ground untenable. For there is not one of the three ways in which this has been attempted, which has not been shown to involve either a violation of a principle of syntax, or a deviation from the ordinary, perhaps, I should say the invariable, arrangement of the words, when an ascription of praise is intended, (invariable at least in the practice both of the Septuagint† and the New Testament writers) or both these anomalies together.

But besides these considerations as to the construction of the words in the original, there is something in the *antithetical* form of the sentence, which clearly indicates the same thing, and confirms, if such confirmation were necessary, the common translation. I allude, as you will perceive, to the phrase "*according to the flesh.*" Is not this expression evi-

* Wakefield.

† On the alleged exception to this, see the next note.

dently intended to distinguish what he was *thus*, from what he was *otherwise*? Does it not immediately suggest the question "What was he else?—What was he *not according to the flesh?*"—The ordinary translation of the phrase in question conveys the precise meaning of the original:—"*as concerning the flesh;*" that is "*as far as respects the flesh,*" or "*as to his human nature;*" which is thus contrasted with that higher view of his person, according to which he was the possessor of underived and independent existence. Remove from the words this idea of antithesis, and you deprive them of all force and meaning whatever: you convert them into a useless and unnatural pleonasm, which adds weakness, instead of strength and propriety, to the expression and the sentiment. "He "could not be better or greater than Abraham, or Isaac, by "this *fleshly origin;* and to insist so particularly upon it "would have rendered the matter more marked and certain; "but there is a magnificent rise in the climax, when we come "to read, that this Christ, who came of the fathers according "to the flesh, was indeed and in reality GOD BLESSED FOR "EVER!" *—As to translating the words in question "*by natural descent,*" not only is it liable to the objection, in all its force, which has just been stated; but it is likewise a most arbitrary freedom with the words themselves, which is utterly inadmissible, and deserving of the severest reprehension. †

5th. Heb. i. 8. "But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever." ‡.

On this passage, I shall not need to detain you long. Two or three remarks will be sufficient, to prove it a most explicit testimony to our Lord's Divinity, an incontrovertible instance

* Nares' Remarks on the Improved Version of the New Testament, p. 165.

† See Note p.

‡ Πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν· Ὁ θρόνος σου, ὁ Θεός, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος.

of the application to him of the name of GOD, in its unqualified sense.

1. The translation of the words proposed by the adversaries of this doctrine, carries in it its own refutation :—"God is thy throne for ever and ever."—"*God is thy throne!!*"—God is called a Rock, a Refuge, a Fortress, a Sun, a Shield, by obvious and beautiful metaphor. But here, it is not pretended that there is any metaphor. It is not meant that God is, in any figurative sense, (which it would not, indeed, be very easy to conceive) the throne of his Son. There is, it is alleged, an *ellipsis;* "God is thy throne," meaning, "God is *the supporter*, or *the stability*, of thy throne." Such an expression, however, in such a sense, is, I am confident, without its fellow in the Scriptures, or in any writings in any language.

2. Not only is this the case, but the words, when so rendered, contain a glaring departure from the established practice of Greek syntax. For if the writer of the epistle really meant to express what our opponents impute to him, the original word answering to *throne*, as being the predicate of the proposition, ought, agreeably to the rule mentioned on John i. 1. to have been without the article. So that we have here a figure of speech, itself unnatural and unexampled, expressed, at the same time, in false Greek. *

3. There can be no doubt, that the original words rendered "O *God*,"—in the vocative case, or case of address,—may, with perfect propriety, be so translated :† and we shall see immediately their consistency, when understood as an address, with what follows in the subsequent verses, where the

* See Middleton on the Greek article—pp. 576, 577. Eclectic Review, vol. v. pp. 386, 387.

† I might have said more: it is, in the Septuagint and New Testament, the almost invariable form in which the vocative case occurs.

writer applies to him another quotation from the Old Testament, in which the title LORD is plainly equivalent to JEHOVAH.

4. The ordinary translation agrees with the whole scope and design of the chapter, which is to assert and prove the exalted dignity of him who is the subject of it, who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Now, "*God is thy throne*," in the sense attached to the expression conveys nothing in the least degree peculiar:—for God is the stability of *all* thrones. The Angels, with whom Jesus is, in the context, compared, are elsewhere denominated "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers:" and it is just as true of them, that God is the stability of *their* glorious state, as it can be in the case supposed. How, then, are we to imagine, that, for the express purpose of proving the superiority of Christ to angels, the writer should, with formality and emphasis, mention a circumstance, in which there is no peculiarity whatever, but which he might, with equal propriety and truth, have affirmed of angels, or even of earthly princes, as of Christ?

5. I might spare myself the trouble of these remarks; for several of those who either are avowedly, or are at least known to be, hostile to the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, distinctly admit, that GOD is here in the vocative case, and consequently, that Jesus is, in this instance, so denominated.*

* "I will conclude with noticing, what, indeed, is already known, that *Eusebius*, in his *Dem. Evang.* has for ὁ θεὸς quoted ὦ θεέ: and that *Wetstein* whose bias is elsewhere sufficiently manifest, candidly admits that ὁ θεὸς is here the vocative, and that the writer has called Christ by the name of God." Middleton's "Doctrine of the Greek Article," p. 579.—[Wetstein not only considers it as in the vocative here, but conceives that in the subsequent part of the quotation, where ὁ θεὸς occurs twice, and is rendered "*God even thy God*," it should, in the first of these occurrences of it, be rendered in the vocative too. His words are:—"ὁ θεὸς] "Prius vocandi casu iterum intelligendum est, ut commate 8. Cum enim in eo sit Paulus, ut honorem et digni-

They do not, indeed, draw the conclusion to which this naturally leads; but still shelter themselves under the supposed *inferior sense* of the term; which they consider as originally applied to Solomon, in the psalm from which the above address is quoted. * The truth of this hypothesis we decidedly deny; and understand the psalm as a *direct* prediction of the glory of the Messiah's person, character, and reign. But, on the supposition that it were well-founded, let us observe for a moment what would follow. If *God*, in the quotation, is to be understood in its inferior sense,—in the same sense in which it is conceived to be applied to Solomon, the argument of the writer who makes the quotation is as effectually destroyed, as it is by the monstrous translation-"God is thy throne." Angels are called "*gods*," in a sense surely *not inferior* to that in which the term could be applied to Solomon. What, then, becomes of the argument, derived from the quotations, in proof of Christ's *superiority* to angels? The passage quoted is, on this supposition, as conclusive an evidence of *Solomon's* superiority, as of Christ's.

tatem Christi adserat, magis consentaneum est, ut Dei nomen illi hic tribui credamus."—"God] In its first occurrence in this verse is again to be understood in the vocative case, as in verse 8. For since in it the object of Paul is to assert the honour and dignity of Christ, it is more consistent to consider the name of God as here given to him."—According to Wetstein, therefore, the whole would stand thus:—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."]—"I am glad to see, that since the publication of his discourse before the Unitarian Society, June 1808, *Dr. Carpenter* has seen reason to admit, that the idiom of the Greek *forbids* our rendering it 'God is thy throne;' which, in his discourse, he had selected as one among the most important *improved* renderings: he very candidly, therefore, desires his former remarks to be expunged. Letters to Mr. Veysie, Introd. p. xi. He at the same time, however, contends for the *lower sense* of *Elohim*, as applied to Solomon, in Psalm xlv." Nares's Remarks on Impr. Vers. pp. 211, 212.

* Psalm xlv. 6.

It could not, in truth, prove Christ to be higher than even the princes of this world.

6th. Besides the passages which have now been quoted and illustrated, there is a particular *class* of texts, which have been brought forward into more prominent notice of late, on this interesting subject; the application of which depends on the usage of the Greek language with respect to the definite article; a usage not only ascertained beyond all controversy by the learning of recent critics, but recognized and proceeded upon, without any reference to the support of a theological system, in almost all the older English translations of the Bible.

I shall mention only two of these texts as a specimen of the whole:

2 Peter i. 1. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, *through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*"—These words are rendered, on the margin of the larger English Bibles—"through the righteousness *of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" And there cannot be a doubt, that, according to the established principles of Greek construction, this is their only just translation. An instance of construction, in every respect parallel, occurs at the eleventh verse of this same chapter, where the principles alluded to are correctly observed:—"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom *of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" It is just as improper to render the words in the first verse, "through the righteousness *of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,*" (unless the appellations "God and our Saviour" be understood as both connecting with "Jesus Christ") as it would be to render those in this verse

"into the kingdom *of the Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*"*

Titus ii. 13. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing *of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*" These words, even as they stand in our received translation, may evidently be understood as equivalent to "the glorious appearing of *Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour.*" It is more than probable, that our translators intended them to be so understood; for if they be understood otherwise, they are unquestionably a misinterpretation. To avoid all ambiguity, and to express the precise sense of the original, they ought to be rendered, "the glorious appearing *of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" Besides the established rule of construction formerly referred to, there is, in the present instance, an additional consideration in support of this rendering, which, if it were needed, is of no trifling weight; I mean the circumstance, that, while we are directed very often to the second *appearing* of *Jesus Christ*, as the object of Christian hope, my recollection does not at present furnish me with any instance, in which we read of the *appearing* of *the Father.*†

Having detained you longer than I intended on this particular, I now go forward to the proof, that the name JEHOVAH is also given in the Scriptures to Jesus Christ.

I do not at all insist on the general application of the term LORD to Christ, throughout the New Testament: because the

* The words in the first verse are—ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ—and in the eleventh—εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ Σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ—It is further worthy of remark, that in the second verse, where there is a designed distinction between God the Father, and Jesus our Lord, the construction is different, the article being repeated:—ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν.

† See Note F.

original word so rendered is capable of expressing, and is certainly used to express, dignity of various kinds and degrees. It is the word which is, in some instances, rendered by our translators, SIR; and it might with propriety have been so rendered more frequently than it is. On the *mere* designation of Christ by this title, therefore, no conclusive argument can be built. One observation, however, in the way of exception to this remark, ought to be attended to. The word which is rendered LORD in the New Testament is the word by which the name JEHOVAH is invariably expressed by the Septuagint translators of the Old. In such passages, therefore, as are quoted from the Old Testament into the New, we are entitled to understand and interpret it as equivalent to JEHOVAH. Thus much it would certainly be most uncandid to question.

JEHOVAH is the incommunicable name of the Supreme God; signifying his eternal, independent, and immutable existence. He appropriates it to himself, calling it "MY NAME JEHOVAH;" and the writer of the eighty-third Psalm concludes with these words, "That men may know, that thou, WHOSE NAME ALONE IS JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth."—If this name, therefore, is directly given, in the Scriptures, to the Messiah, to Jesus of Nazareth, the question of his supreme Divinity ought to be decided.

Let me request your attention, then, to the following instances; which, as in the former case, are selected from amongst more.

1. Luke i. 16, 17. "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to THE LORD THEIR GOD. And he shall go before HIM in the spirit and power of Elias—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Observe here, 1*st*, That the pronoun HIM, in the 17th verse, has for its only antecedent, "THE LORD THEIR GOD"

in the end of the 16th. 2*dly*, To convince you that there is no propriety in introducing any *supplement*, to explain away the immediate reference of this to the Messiah himself, and to force it to apply to the Father who sent him, you have only to consider, how precisely the language of the angel, as recorded by Luke, accords with the language of the ancient prophets, on the same subject. The words of Isaiah, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH, make straight in the desert a highway for OUR GOD,"*—were fulfilled, according to the New Testament explanation of them, when John the Baptist appeared, as the forerunner of the Messiah, to announce his approach, and prepare the people for his reception. John applies them to himself. In answer to the inquiry, "Who art thou?" "I am the voice," said he, "of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, (JEHOVAH) as said the prophet Esaias:"† and the Evangelists distinctly affirm concerning him, "*This is he* that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, (JEHOVAH) make his paths straight."‡ Now, whose way was John sent to prepare? Whom was he commissioned to introduce? "I am not THE CHRIST," says he, "but I am SENT BEFORE HIM:"§ "THAT HE SHOULD BE MADE MANIFEST TO ISRAEL, therefore am I come, baptizing with water."‖ A comparison of these passages makes it strikingly evident, that HE is the person to whom the name JEHOVAH is given by the prophet.—This is powerfully confirmed by another passage in the prophecies of Malachi: "Behold, I will send MY messenger, and he shall prepare the way before ME: and the Lord, whom ye seek,

* Chap. xl. 3. † John i. 23. ‡ Matth. iii. 3. § John iii. 28.
‖ John i. 31.

shall suddenly come to HIS TEMPLE, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith JEHOVAH of hosts."* He before whom the messenger was to be sent is here the speaker; and this speaker is Jehovah of hosts: the Lord whom the people sought, even the Messenger of the covenant in whom they delighted, was to come to *his* temple: he, therefore, who was to come to that temple could be no other than Jehovah the God of Israel, for whose exclusive worship it was reared and consecrated, by whose name alone it was called, and who uniformly appropriates it to himself by the appellation, "MY HOUSE." It was not the temple, and could never be so denominated, of any merely human prophet, or of any creature however exalted.—It is remarkable too, how the terms in which John speaks of Christ accord with the elevated and Divine appellations previously given him by the prophets:—"This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man who is preferred before me; for he was before me." John i. 30.—I am aware that the words thus translated† have by some been rendered "for he was *my chief*," or "*my superior*." But, without disputing the *possibility* of the words bearing this sense, it is most unnatural to suppose John to have used the *past tense*, if such was his meaning: "He *is* preferred before me, for he *was* my superior." The use of this tense fixes the phrase to the meaning given it by our translators;—and then we have, in John's words, a clear and striking declaration of the pre-existence of Christ:—He *came after* John;—and yet he *was before* him;—a pointed, and obviously designed *antithesis*.—In all this there is perfect harmony.—Jesus Christ is the person *before whom, before whose face* the predicted messenger is sent:—He is "*the Lord, the Messenger of the Covenant*, who

* Mal. iii. 1. † Ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν, &c.

was to come to *his* temple"—"*Jehovah*, whose way was to be prepared."—And in this view of his supreme dignity, well might John say—"the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose!"

2. Heb. i. 10. "And, Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands."—These words are quoted from the 102d Psalm, the 24th verse, where the Psalmist is addressing Him who, throughout the Psalm, is called JEHOVAH: and there can be no manner of doubt, that this is one of the cases formerly alluded to, in which the word rendered *Lord* in the New Testament, must be understood as equivalent to that sacred name. This being, on all hands, admitted, there is another thing which is at least equally clear, that the writer of the epistle quotes the words, as a direct address to him, whom he had just distinguished from angels by the title of "THE SON." If there is one thing, indeed, clearer than another, in the course of our present argument, it is, that the expression with which the eighth verse begins, "*Unto the Son he saith*," includes both the quotations which follow; and that the particle *and*, in the beginning of verse 10th, is meant to connect the two together, as referring to the same person. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom:—And, (that is, *unto the Son he also saith*,) Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth."—With the utmost stretch of charity, I find it, I confess, difficult, to give those who question this, the credit which they claim for candour. If it be not as I have stated, there seems to be no certainty in human language; no possibility of a man's expressing himself so as to avoid being misunderstood.—It has, I am aware, been objected, that in the eighth verse —"But unto the Son he saith," &c. the preposition rendered

unto, is the same which is rendered *of* in the seventh—"And of the Angels he saith," &c.; and that as it does not denote *address* in the one case, neither does it in the other.—I took no notice of this when commenting on the 8th verse as one of the instances in which Christ is called God, because, in whatever way the preposition be there translated, the words themselves *are* an address, and can be nothing else. Now the 10th verse is an address too: and the only question is, to whom, according to the apostle's representation, the address is made. Unitarians say, it is an address *to* Jehovah *concerning* Christ and his kingdom.—Let us see then whether there be any thing in the words relating to this subject, and how, in this view of them, they suit the apostle's design.—The words in the quotation, under the form of an address to Jehovah, contain no more than a simple declaration of his *power* in the creation of heaven and earth, of his *immutability*, and his *eternal existence*.—To the *government of Christ* there is, *in the words themselves*, no sort of reference, direct or remote.—Socinian ingenuity has framed a reference, by connecting the power, and immutability, and eternity of Jehovah with the perpetuity of the reign of Christ; and this is thought quite natural and easy. But it is *bringing out of* the passage what is *not in it*. The reference is entirely gratuitous. It is truly a remote deduction.—But besides, such an interpretation deprives the passage of all peculiarity of application to the apostle's purpose. His purpose is, to show the superiority of Christ to angels. Now, unless the words quoted are considered as *addressed to Christ*, what are they to this purpose? How is a declaration that JEHOVAH created the heavens and the earth, that he is immutable, and everlasting, to be made to bear upon this point?—For my own part, I can see nothing in the words, on this interpretation, to prevent their being prefaced with "*concerning the angels he*

saith," with just as much propriety as "*concerning the Son he saith.*" And a commentary which divests the apostle's quotation of all peculiar and conclusive application to his purpose cannot surely be legitimate.

3. Isaiah vi. 1—5. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also JEHOVAH, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: —And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is JEHOVAH OF HOSTS; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that spake, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE KING, JEHOVAH OF HOSTS."

Do you ask, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" We have an answer from the oracle of God.—In the 9th and 10th verses of this same chapter, God says to the prophet, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye, indeed, but understand not, and see ye, indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed."—Compare these words with John xii. 41.; where, speaking of the Jews rejecting the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, notwithstanding all the miracles by which it was confirmed, the Evangelist quotes the words of the prophet, as remarkably verified by their obstinate perverseness, and then adds: "These things said Esaias, when he SAW HIS GLORY, AND SPAKE OF HIM."—There is no evading the inference which the comparison of these passages forces upon our minds. When it is said by the Evangelist, that Isaiah "*saw his glory*"—are we not to understand him as referring to the glory *which Isaiah describes himself as having seen?* "I SAW Jehovah," says the pro-

phet, "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up:"—"MINE EYES HAVE SEEN the king, Jehovah of hosts."—"These things," affirms the Evangelist, "said Esaias, when he SAW HIS GLORY."—I have spoken of the *inference*, which the comparison of these passages forces upon our minds: but the truth is, there is, properly speaking, no *inference* in the case; but an express and pointed declaration, on the part of the inspired historian, that the glory of Jehovah, seen by the prophet, in the sublime and magnificent vision by which his mind was so powerfully affected, was the GLORY OF CHRIST.—"I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say."

There are, I am fully aware, many other passages in the Old Testament scriptures, in which the name JEHOVAH is given to the Messiah, besides those to which I have now directed your attention.—"Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous BRANCH, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."*—"And I (Jehovah) will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon ME whom they have pierced."—"I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear:" with the application of the words to Christ by an inspired apostle; "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of CHRIST; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, (Jehovah) every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."—"Surely, shall one say, in JEHOVAH have I righteousness and strength:—In JEHOVAH

* See Note L.

shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory:" with the application by the same apostle; "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."*—On these, however, and other passages that might be mentioned, I do not insist; my object being, as I have already intimated, a selection of proofs, rather than a full discussion of the whole argument. If the evidence adduced on this particular be sufficient to ascertain the fact, that the name JEHOVAH is given in the Scriptures to Jesus Christ, a *principle* of interpretation will thus be established, which will at once produce and justify the application to our adorable Redeemer of a variety of other passages, which might possibly, indeed, be interpreted otherwise, but which find in this principle a more natural and easy explanation.†

I shall conclude this part of my subject by observing, that the *proper* title LORD, although not sufficient of itself, like the name Jehovah, to ascertain the Divine dignity of him to whom it is applied, is yet given to Messiah, in one instance at least, in terms which are very peculiar. I refer to the first verse of the 110th Psalm:—"JEHOVAH said unto MY LORD, sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."—"What think ye of Christ?" said Jesus, on one occasion, to the assembled Pharisees, "Whose son is

* Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Zech. xii. 10. Isa. xlv. 23. with Rom. xiv. 10, 11. Isa. xlv. 24, 25. with 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

† I have forborn noticing those places in the Old Testament history, in which the appearances are recorded of that mysterious person, called the Angel of the covenant, the Angel of the Divine presence, &c. but who, while he is spoken of as an angel, assumes the name, and speaks in the character of Jehovah;—not because I think this kind of evidence irrelevant or inconclusive; but because, even amongst those who admit it, there are diversities of judgment as to the extent to which it should be carried; and because it would have led to a discussion too extensive for the plan of these discourses.

he?"—They immediately replied, "The Son of David."—"How, then," he rejoined, "doth David in spirit call him LORD, saying, the Lord (Jehovah), said unto MY LORD, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him LORD, how is he his Son?"* The question, it seems, perplexed and silenced the Pharisees:—"No man was able to answer him a word:"—and it must for ever confound, and *ought* to silence, all those, who deny that Jesus possessed any nature superior to that which he derived by his descent from David, or any existence previous to the time, when, by his birth into this world, he became *David's Son*. The only simple and satisfactory answer to the question, is to be found in the distinction of natures for which we contend. He was "God manifest in the flesh;" and he was thus at once "the ROOT and the OFFSPRING of David," David's SON, and David's LORD.

II. I now come forward to the SECOND BRANCH of this important subject, the DIVINE ATTRIBUTES ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures.—I shall, on this part of the argument, confine myself to the four following particulars; and shall illustrate them with as great brevity as is at all consistent with doing justice to the cause of truth:—ETERNAL EXISTENCE—ALMIGHTY POWER—OMNIPRESENCE—and OMNISCIENCE.

These are attributes indisputably peculiar to the one supreme God: and therefore, if really ascribed to Jesus Christ, must confirm the conclusion to which we have already been brought, that the names GOD and JEHOVAH, when applied to him, are to be understood in their highest and most unqualified sense.

1. ETERNAL EXISTENCE.—Those many passages of the Gospel history, in which Jesus speaks of his having "come

* Matth. xxii. 41—46.

down from heaven;" of his having "come forth from the Father, and come into the world, and being about to leave the world, and return to the Father;" of his "ascending up where he was before;" and others of a similar description, I pass over, to avoid being tedious; although I am perfectly satisfied, that, except on the supposition of at least his *pre-existence*, they are incapable of any interpretation that is not, in the highest degree, forced and unnatural.

Our Lord expressly affirms, that he existed "*before Abraham.*"—John viii. 58. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was (or was born) I am."*

Of these words various explanations have been given by Unitarian expositors. The principal are the two following.—1. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before *Abram* shall become *Abraham*, I am *he*," that is, the Christ.—I am afraid you will think, such of you as are strangers to Socinian glosses, that I must certainly be mistaken: but I assure you there is no mistake in the case. This interpretation was really "proposed, although not absolutely adopted," by several of the old Socinians. But why, you will say, mention it *now*? If it was only *proposed* by *them*, has it ever been *adopted since*?—It has:—and it is this alone that induces me to notice it. It has been "revived and defended" by more than one writer of the modern Socinian school.†—But what *is* the explanation? The question is natural, for the explanation is one which needs to be explained.—"Before Abram shall become Abraham, I am *he*."—It was promised, you know to the patriarch, when his name was *Abram*, that he should be "the

* πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι, ἐγὼ εἰμι.

† "This explanation of the text was proposed, though not absolutely adopted, by Slichtingius, Wolzogenius, Stegman, and others of the old Socinians. It has been revived and defended by a writer in the Theological Repository, vol. iv. p. 348. and Dr. Carpenter, in his letters to Mr. Veysie, p. 246. expresses his approbation of it." Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 81.

father of many nations;" and on that occasion, his name, with significant reference to the promise, was changed to *Abraham:* —And our Lord, it seems, in this declaration to the Jews, "solemnly avers, that before the accomplishment of this promise to Abraham he appears as the Messiah!!"—To deny to the author of this conceit the merit of ingenuity, would certainly not be to do him justice. But whether it was originally the sudden thought of a lucky moment, or excogitated by intense meditation, it is, beyond a doubt, a conceit as wild and extravagant as ever suggested itself to a fancy sent abroad in quest of solutions for a troublesome difficulty. Apart from the absurdity of supposing a sentence in which there must be an ellipsis (i. e. an omission, to be supplied by the hearer) of the very word that is indispensable to make out the sense; and of imagining our Lord to express so simple an idea in a way so quaint and unnatural, for no conceivable purpose, unless it was to be misunderstood:—I say, apart from such considerations as these, what shall we think of the proposition itself, which our Lord is thus made to affirm;—and to affirm in the terms of grave and solemn asseveration? —that he *now* appeared as the Messiah; and that his appearance was before an event, which was quite well known to be still future!—But I am wasting your time.—I proceed to mention a *second* interpretation of the words, which is the one now most generally adopted.—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I am *he*:"* i. e. the Christ. —Our Lord is supposed to refer to the certainty of the Divine determinations, and to say, that before Abraham came into being, his own appearance as the Messiah was so irrevocably fixed in the immutable counsels of God, that he might be said even then to have existed in that character.—This explanation

* Improved Version of the New Testament.

though not so extravagant as the former, is not less untenable. Let me request your attention to the following brief remarks. —1. It is admitted that the same words, which they render "I am *he*," are so translated in the 24th and 28th verses of this chapter:—"If ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins:"—"When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*." It is very obvious, however, that phrases of this description must be understood according to the connexion in which they occur. By this alone it can be determined in what instances the supplement is necessary. ——2. The expression, "before Abraham *was* born, I *am* the Christ," is very unnatural, and quite anomalous. "I *was* the Christ," is the phraseology which any one intending to express the sentiment ascribed to our Lord, would unquestionably have used.—To render the original words thus, however, as some have ventured to do, is, at least, very arbitrary. That the present tense may sometimes be used to denote *past time that comes down to and includes the present;* that is, may be used for what is called the preterperfect—*I am* for *I have been;* is conceivable on a sufficiently simple principle. But that it should be used for *time absolutely past—I am* for *I was*—supposes a deviation from the obvious principles of language, and consequently from ordinary usage, which nothing but absolute necessity could justify, and of which it is at least doubtful whether any instances parallel to the one before us can be produced.—If we understand our Lord's words as affirming his *past* and *present* existence as *one and the same*—i. e. as affirming his *absolute* or *eternal* existence, they are not only correct, but full of beauty, and energy: nor can their grammatical impropriety be easily accounted for on any other hypothesis.——3. How came the Jews so completely to misunderstand our Lord's meaning, if the sentiment ascribed to him by the adversaries of his Divinity, was that which

he intended to express?—Reference is generally made, in discussing this subject, to the *Greek* of the Evangelist. We should recollect, however, that this was not the language in which Jesus spoke;—that he conversed with the Jews in their own tongue; and that they were therefore much better qualified, especially when the look, and emphasis, and manner of the speaker are taken into account, to understand what he meant, than we can possibly be now. Yet the Jews *did* understand him as affirming something widely different. This is clear from their conduct. They immediately "took up stones to stone him." They conceived him to be guilty of *blasphemy*: evidently for the same reason as on some other occasions, "because he, being a man, *made himself God.*" We never hear of their offering to stone him for simply asserting his Messiahship: and the idea which has often been suggested, is, therefore, far from being destitute of probability, that there was, in our Lord's words, an allusion, perceived by the Jews, and rendered, perhaps, emphatical by his manner, to the words of God to Moses—"I AM THAT I AM: thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."* †——4. On *our* interpretation of the words of Jesus, they are a proper answer to the question of the Jews. On that

* Exod. iii. 14.

† Mr. Belsham falls into a curious inconsistency on this subject:—"The Jews," says he, "*evidently understood* the language of Jesus as an assertion of his existence before the birth of Abraham; for, in the paroxysm of their rage, they took up stones to stone him as a liar and a blasphemer."—Yet, a few pages after, when he has endeavoured to show how common that figure of speech is in the Scriptures, by which any thing is represented as *existing in the purpose of God*, long before it actually comes into existence, we find the following words: "To the Jews, therefore, who were familiar with the language and imagery of their own prophets, our Lord's declaration of his existence, as the Messiah, before the birth of Abraham, would not sound so harsh and offensive, as it does to modern readers; who, not being accustomed to the bold dramatic language of prophecy, are *apt to understand that of actual existence, which the Jews would easily perceive to be figurative.*"

of our opponents, they contain what we should be very apt, in the ordinary intercourse of life, to denominate an unworthy evasion.—The question respected the time of his existence:—the answer has no reference whatever to this subject:—"Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I was ordained, in the purpose of God, to the office of Messiah, before Abraham was born!"—The opponents of our Lord's Divinity, accordingly, are under the necessity of denying that this was at all intended by him as an answer to the question of the Jews. "He did not deign to rectify," they say, "their silly mistake." "He did not regard their impertinent question."

In thus affirming his having existed before the days of Abraham, our Lord asserts no more than other passages of scripture concur to establish: and this agreement of our interpretation with the testimony of other parts of scripture is an additional confirmation of its truth.—In a passage formerly quoted from the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews he is addressed as "JEHOVAH who, in the beginning, laid the foundations of the earth;" and who must, therefore, have existed, as the Psalmist expresses it, "before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the worlds were formed."—And the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians, expressly declares him to have been "*before all things.*"*

* Col. i. 17.—It is true that in the 15th verse he is called "the first-born of every creature," or of the whole creation: in which expression, it has been alleged, we have a direct testimony that he was not an eternal, but a created being. The phrase πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως appears here, however, most naturally to mean the supremacy to which he is exalted, as the "appointed HEIR of all things,"—the "LORD OF ALL;" which *the Heir* is described to be, Gal. iv. 1.—In Psalm lxxxix. 27. Jehovah, speaking of the Messiah, says, "Also I will make him MY FIRST-BORN, higher than the kings of the earth:" of which the meaning is, that he would invest him with pre-eminent dignity and authority, "putting all things under his feet."—This agrees well with the

Further: the titles and designations which are used in the Scriptures to express self-existence and eternity, are applied to him by the inspired writers; and are represented as assumed by himself.—Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Although I am fully satisfied that these words are the words of Jesus Christ, yet if any shall insist that they are spoken by the Father, the argument, it may be observed, will not, by the admission of this, be at all weakened. For since the refusal to acknowledge them as the words of Christ proceeds upon the principle that the titles assumed in them belong exclusively to the only true God, this gives the greater conclusiveness to other passages, in which it is beyond a doubt that Christ does appropriate some of these titles to himself. In the 17th and 18th verses of the same chapter, he is introduced as saying to the beloved disciple, "Fear not: I am the first and the last, and the living one:* and I was dead; and, behold, I am alive for

subsequent context in the epistle:—"And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence;"—as it does also with Heb. i. 2, 3., where Jesus is spoken of as "HEIR *of all things*," and at the same time as "the brightness of (the Father's) glory, and the *express* IMAGE *of his person*;" just as in Col. i. 15., he is called "the IMAGE of the invisible God," and "the FIRST-BORN of the whole creation." The word rendered *image* in the two passages is indeed different; but this does not affect their general parallelism.—Schleusner says, "*Christus vocatur* πρωτότοκος πασης κτίσεως, "*princeps et dominus omnium rerum creatarum*:"—and Parkhurst: "Christ is called, Col. i. 15. Πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, *the First-begotten, or First-born of the whole creation*, because he was begotten to be *heir and Lord of all things*; (Comp. Heb. i. 2, 8. Acts x. 36.) and *in all things*, or *over all persons, to have the pre-eminence*. (Comp. Psal. lxxxix. 27.) And because all things were created ΕΙΣ αυτον, FOR *him*, as well as δι' αυτου, *by him*, in the same view he is styled absolutely ΤΟΝ πρωτοτοκον, THE *First-born*, Heb. i. 6."

* The original words are Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος, καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, καὶ ὁ ζῶν· καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρὸς, κ. τ. λ. Which our translators render, "I am the first and the last; *I am* he that liveth and was dead," &c. The reader will observe, that a καὶ is in this translation omitted, and a supplemental *I am* unnecessarily thrown in in its place. The words are literally rendered as in the text. They are pointed

evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." And at the 13th verse of the 22d chapter: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."—When these passages are compared with the language of Jehovah, Isaiah xliv. 6. "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I AM THE FIRST, AND I AM THE LAST; AND BESIDES ME THERE IS NO GOD;" you need not be directed, surely, to draw the inference. The titles denote eternity and self-existence: they are appropriated by Jehovah to himself: and yet they are repeatedly assumed by Jesus Christ.—I conclude this particular with the remarkable words of the prophet Micah, on which the preceding portions of scripture may serve as a sufficient comment: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, who is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."*

2. ALMIGHTY POWER.

This Divine attribute is plainly ascribed to Christ in a prophecy of Isaiah formerly quoted: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called—THE MIGHTY GOD."† The phrase in the original, as well as in our translation, is precisely the same with that which occurs in verse 21st of the 10th chapter of the same book: "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto THE MIGHTY GOD:"—and there can be no doubt that it is a characteristic designation of the true God, in which, by the attribute of omnipotence, he is distinguished from the idols

in this way by Griesbach; nor does any various reading appear, which could have led our translators to render them as they have done. I have taken no notice of the words in verse 11th, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," because, in this occurrence of them, they are rejected by Griesbach as spurious.

* Micah v. 2. † Isaiah ix. 6.

of the heathen, which could "neither do good nor do evil: which were all vanity, and their work of nought."—I have already said, that I consider the following words in the beginning of the book of Revelation, as the words of Jesus Christ: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, THE ALMIGHTY." The connexion in which the words stand, and the manner of the writer in other parts of the same book, concur to show that Jesus is the speaker. And even if it were otherwise, the clear and frequent application of a part of these expressions to Christ, is sufficient to justify us in the application of the whole. He who is the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," "the living one," we may be well assured is also THE ALMIGHTY. It has been alleged that the true reading of the verse, according to the text of Griesbach, precludes the application of it to Christ: "I am Alpha and Omega, saith THE LORD GOD, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." But, supposing this to be a correct rendering of Griesbach's text, how can it preclude the application of the words to Jesus, except by begging the question, and assuming that the title "the LORD GOD" is a title that is not attributable to him? If our argument for the application of the verse to him be otherwise correct, the addition (if I may so speak) to the *divinity* of the title can serve only to strengthen it. I question, however, if that which has now been given be the only just translation of the text of Griesbach. I appeal to every Greek scholar, who may choose to examine the passage, whether the following, be not an equally, if not a more natural rendering: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, saith the Lord, the God who is, and who was, and who is to come," (that is, the eternal self-existent

God,) "the Almighty:"* in which case also, the argument remains the same.—"We look for the Saviour from heaven," says Paul, "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, (the mighty energy) whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."† Such language cannot, with propriety, be used, respecting any being who is not possessed of *omnipotence;* and he who is possessed of omnipotence, can be no other than the true God. But the almighty power of Jesus will be still more fully apparent, when we come to consider the Divine works that are ascribed to him in the word of God.

3. OMNIPRESENCE.

Jesus, while he was on earth, when delivering directions for the conduct of his people in all succeeding times, gave the following encouraging promise:—"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."‡ To settle the meaning of this remarkable declaration, it is sufficient to compare it with an assurance given to Moses, by Jehovah, the God of Israel:—"In all places," said he, "where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."§—These two promises are precisely the same. They are both equally clear declarations of omnipresence: and the reasoning which would set aside the one, would as effectually invalidate the other. No being could make either the one or the other, but a being who was present in all places, and who knew all things.—It makes no difference whatever in the argument, whether we consider

* The words are Εγω ειμι το Α και το Ω, λεγει Κυριος ὁ Θεος ὁ ων και ὁ ην και ὁ ερχομενος, ὁ παντοκρατωρ: and the meaning depends entirely on the punctuation; which may either be—λεγει κυριος ὁ Θεος, ὁ ων, κ. τ. λ.; or—λεγει κυριος, ὁ Θεος ὁ ων, και ὁ ην, και ὁ ερχομενος. And it should be observed that the phrase λεγει κυριος is the common phrase in the Septuagint for "saith the Lord."

† Phil. iii. 21. ‡ Matth. xviii. 20. § Exod. xx. 24.

omnipresence as *virtual* or *actual*:—the former meaning that the agent, though not present, operates *as if* present, in the exercise of knowledge and power; and the latter, that he is himself actually present in all places where his knowledge and power are exercised. It makes no difference, I say, in the argument, whether we understand it in the one sense or in the other. *Omnipresence*, in either sense, is one of the incommunicable attributes of Deity. In either sense, it implies an unerring knowledge of all that is passing in every part of the world at the same instant, and the power of producing effects in every part of the world at the same instant. He of whom this can be truly affirmed must be God.

The promise of his continued presence with them, made by Jesus to his disciples, at the very time when he was about to leave them, is equally incapable of a simple or consistent explanation, on any other principle. Who but a being, conscious to himself of the possession of this Divine attribute, could say to them, in such circumstances, when just about to bestow upon them his parting blessing, and to ascend visibly into heaven, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?" They who would translate these words "*to the end of the age*," and interpret them of "the end of the Jewish dispensation, at the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple;"* and who would thus sweep away all that animating encouragement which the servants of the Saviour have since been accustomed to derive from his promise;—adopt an interpretation which, after all, is insufficient for their purpose. For the presence of Jesus upon the earth, in his human nature, after he was taken up from his apostles into heaven, was just as impossible for a day as for an age, and for an age as for the whole duration of time. He did not remain on

* Impr. Vers. Text, and Note upon it.

earth till "the end of the age:" and he who could be with his apostles, by the care of his superintending providence, the supports of his Spirit, the miraculous operations of his power, and the efficacious influence of his grace, *during their lives*, may be with his faithful servants still, and continue with them to the end.—To interpret a declaration so unqualified, "Lo I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the world"—or even (supposing the propriety of the limitation) "to the end of this age," as having been fulfilled by the *occasional* appearances of Christ to his servants, *in vision*, or by supposed *corporal presence* (I say *supposed*, because in no instance is there sufficient evidence of it)—during the period of the apostolic ministry; is not to *explain* it, but to *explain it away*.* Even these occasional appearances implied a perfect and immediate knowledge of all that was passing upon earth, connected with the progress of his cause and kingdom; for by such knowledge they were timed and regulated.—Some, indeed, refer the word *always* more especially to the continued "communications of the Holy Spirit," that is of *miraculous powers*, during the first age of the Christian church. But to these also the remark just made is strictly applicable: for they were not conferred without knowledge, discrimination, and particular design.

* Even this much is not, if we may take Mr. Belsham's authority, *universally* admitted among Unitarians.—"*Many*," says he, "of the Unitarians believe, that Jesus continued to maintain, *occasionally at least*,† *some* personal and sensible connexion with the church, "(how admirably cautious!)" during the apostolic age, which he expressly promised to do (Matth. xxviii. 20.) and in this way they account for the continuance of those miraculous gifts and powers which were exercised in his name while the apostles lived, and also for occasional personal appearances and interpositions which have never occurred since: but it is believed that he is now withdrawn from all sensible intercourse with this world, though some have *conjectured that he may still be actually present in it*, and attentive to its concerns." *i. e.* observe, *in his human nature* (for according to them he had no other).—Some, then, have actually *conjectured*, that he is still in this world, *in the body*, "the *wandering Jew* of vulgar superstition!!"—See Belsham's Calm Inquiry, pp. 452, 453.

† πάσαι τὰς ἡμέρας—i. e. *at least occasionally!*

Nor is it less applicable to the regular and instantaneous interposition of miraculous power, on all occasions when such interposition was requisite. For if Jesus himself both *possessed* the power, and *knew* all the times at which its exercise was required, his will concurring, at the instant, with the *fiat* pronounced in his name by his servants upon earth; he must be the Almighty and Omniscient God:—unless, indeed, we can bring ourselves to believe, that all that our Saviour meant by these apparently plain and explicit words, "Lo, I am with you—I am with you always"—was, not that he should himself be with them at all; but only that God should be with them, and that he, in his exalted state, should be made acquainted, by Divine communication, with their situations, and labours, and success! And yet this, I apprehend, will be found, on mature consideration, to be the whole amount of meaning that remains, if we deny to the speaker the attribute of omnipresence.

I am fully convinced, that we ought to interpret on the same principle the words of Christ to Nicodemus: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven." Different views, however, have been taken of these words, even by interpreters who are friendly to the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity: and your time will not permit me to enter into any examination of it.

The attribute of omnipresence may also be considered as necessarily involved in the last of those incommunicable perfections of Deity, which, I proposed to show, are ascribed, in the Scriptures, to Jesus Christ:—

4. OMNISCIENCE.

The evidence on this particular may be brought within very short compass: for it is irresistibly conclusive.—"Thou, even THOU ONLY," says Solomon, in his address to Jehovah, at the

dedication of the temple, "Thou, even THOU ONLY, knowest the hearts of all the children of men:"—"The heart," says God himself by the prophet Jeremiah, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I JEHOVAH search the heart, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:"—"I will kill her children with death," says Jesus Christ to the church in Thyatira, "and all the churches shall know, that I AM HE WHO SEARCHETH THE REINS AND HEARTS: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."*—Is there any need of further witness? If this be not a direct and unqualified claim of a peculiar Divine prerogative, there is no meaning in human language; and to "search the Scriptures" for clear and satisfactory knowledge, must be a vain and fruitless task. Even if he had simply said, "All the churches shall know that I SEARCH the reins and the hearts," this of itself would have been enough for the argument; because the passages above cited do most emphatically appropriate the searching of the heart to God alone. But the terms in which he expresses himself are much more definite. They evidently proceed upon the express assumption that this *is* the exclusive prerogative of ONE BEING only. They agree with, and confirm, the appropriation to God, of this universal and intuitive knowledge of the heart, so distinctly marked in the former passages: "All the churches shall know, (not merely "that *I search*" but) that I AM HE THAT SEARCHETH the reins and the hearts." It is just the same as if he had said "that I am THE SEARCHER OF HEARTS:"† I think I might at once,

* 1 Kings viii. 39. Jer. xvii. 10. Rev. ii. 23.

† It is most uncandid to allege, that this is only a Hebrew idiom for *I search*, transferred into the Greek of the New Testament, and called by critics a *Hebraism*. When any feature of character, or circumstance of conduct, is *peculiar to one individual*, it is far from being an uncommon *Greek idiom* to introduce this peculiarity by *a participle preceded by the definite article*, as a

without hesitation, rest the omniscience of Christ on this one proof.—You may notice, however, how exactly this language respecting himself accords with what is said of him, during his abode upon earth;—said in terms which admit of no restriction; John ii. 24, 25: "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them," (*i. e.* to those mentioned in the preceding verse, who professed to have been convinced by his miracles) "because he KNEW ALL MEN; and needed not that any should testify to him of man: for he KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN."*

On a confession of the omniscience of Jesus,—a confession which he himself received without contradiction or explanation,—the apostle Peter, when his heart was bleeding at the remembrance of his sin, founded his touching and impressive appeal, as to the unfeigned sincerity of his repentance and his love:—"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?—Yea, Lord, thou KNOWEST ALL THINGS; thou knowest that I love thee!"—And so may the people of God still make their appeal, when, at any time, they have fallen into sin, and when the sincerity of their penitence and of their Christian

descriptive designation of the individual to whom it belongs; and it then becomes *equivalent to his name.*—"Idem valet participium," (the *idem* refers to what precedes, which regards the effect of the article with an *appellative*, as marking out a person)—"Idem valet participium, Hebræorum more," [this phrase seems here to mean no more than that the Greek idiom in this particular corresponds with the Hebrew,] nominis loco "positum cum articulo: e. g. ὁ τὰ ἰθικὰ γεάψας, *Stephanus*, qui supra dicitur ἰθικογεάφος· ὁ ποιησας τα Διονυσιακα, *Nonnus Panopolitanus*, cujus lib. 48. *Dionysiacōn* titulo *Græce extant*: Αλιξανδρις ῥητως ὁ τα ιρωτικα παιξας· *Achilles Tatius* qui 8 libr. lusit de Clitophontis et Leusippes amoribus: ὁ τα βουκολικα γεαψας, *Theocritus*: ὁ τα Κυπρια γεαψας (scilicet επη, vel ποιηματα) *Stasimus*, ὁ την πατρίδα Κυπριος· ὁ τυραζων *Diabolus*." Vigerus de Idiotismis Græcis, page 13, Glasgow edition, 1813.—On this principle, I feel myself warranted to contend, that, as we are previously aware that the searching of the heart is one of God's peculiar prerogatives—the phrase ὁ ερευνων νεφρους και καρδιας is a descriptive DESIGNATION of THE DIVINE BEING as the searcher of hearts,—and that the assertion εγω ειμι Ὁ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ νεφρους και καρδιας is equivalent to "I AM JEHOVAH"

* In the Improved Version, both this text and the one above quoted from the book of Revelation are passed over without the slightest remark.

profession is questioned. In doing so, they unburden their loaded spirits, and experience a joy, with which, even while "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, a stranger doth not intermeddle."

I am aware it has been alleged, that to *know all things* may signify, no more than to possess *a very extensive and various knowledge*. And in proof of this, the words of this same writer addressed to Christians in general have been quoted—1 John ii. 20. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and *ye know all things*."—By this use of the same expression in reference to the disciples of Christ, it has been argued, the proof of omniscience from the use of it by Peter to Christ himself is entirely destroyed. It would be a marvellous thing that such an evasion should be used, were it not that similar specimens of sophistry in Unitarian reasoning are so common. Every one knows, that the meaning of words and phrases depends greatly on the connexion in which they occur: and a very slender portion of acumen surely is requisite, to discover the essential difference between the passages thus quoted as parallel. Every reader must at once perceive, that, in the *latter*, John is speaking of the full and experimental acquaintance with the *doctrine of the gospel* possessed by those whom he addresses, in distinction from apostates, who had gone out from the society of Christians because they were not *of* them, and in distinction from antichristian opposers of the truth. He adds accordingly, (intimating his confidence that their knowledge of the truth was such, in its heavenly origin, in its extent and correctness, and in its inward operation, as effectually to secure them against seduction)—"These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing, which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all

things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

But what shall we say of the other case? It has been affirmed, that in both cases, "*the knowledge of all things* means only *a very extensive and various knowledge.*" But how will such a view as this suit Peter's argument? "Lord," says he, "thou knowest *all things; thou knowest that I love thee:*"—

1st. Here is *one thing* which Peter was confident his Master knew; and his assurance that he knew *this* thing is founded in his assurance that he knew *all things.* But, without noticing for the present the *nature* of the *one* thing spoken of, unless the term *all* be here used in its universal sense, the inference of the apostle is a complete *non-sequitur,* and his confidence rests on no solid ground. How foolishly would the venerable penitent reason, on such an exposition of his words; "Lord, thy knowledge is very various and extensive; therefore thou knowest that I love thee."

But, 2dly. Notice the *particular description of knowledge* to which Peter more immediately refers:—"Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest *that I love thee.*" While the terms used by the apostle, connected with the nature of his argument, convey an unqualified ascription of omniscience, *his own case* shows, that he had a more especial reference to his *knowledge of the secrets of all hearts.* If *this* was not implied, never were words more nugatory. His appeal respects the state of his own heart:—external evidence was against his professions;—strong grounds existed for suspecting their sincerity;—these grounds were impressed on his remembrance, and the reasonableness of the suspicion more than insinuated, in the threefold repetition of the question, "Lovest thou me?" with a look and emphasis, no doubt, which at once wrung his heart with remorse, and melted it to tenderness.—In this state of mind, to whom but to the Searcher of all

hearts,—to what knowledge short of omniscience, could he make his confident appeal?—I am not fond of the paraphrastic mode of exposition. The following paraphrase of the words by Dr. Guyse, however, seems to convey very correctly their true import:—"Lord, I know there is no deceiving thee, who art fully acquainted with all things, even to the most secret dispositions of the heart: but my great comfort is, that, how justly soever I may suspect myself, and deserve to be suspected by thee and others, thy omniscient eye sees the principle of love which is in my soul towards thee, and the uprightness of my appeal to thee about it."

The reader, then, must be very weak, who is misled by the mere similarity, or even sameness, of phraseology, in circumstances so totally different.

This Discourse has necessarily consisted entirely of proof: nor would it be considered as quite admissible, to deduce any inferences from the point at issue, till the evidence of it has been closed. To detain you longer at present would, besides, be very unseasonable.—I entertain no fears about the practical consequences, if the truth which I am endeavouring to establish, be once received in the love of it.

Respecting that portion of evidence which we have gone over, one remark may be made, which, it is probable, many of you have anticipated:—that with regard to all those texts which have been quoted, no attempt is made on the part of our opponents to prove that, upon the ordinary principles of construction, they are *unfairly* or *unnaturally* rendered. As to a number of the texts, indeed, it is not the translation that is disputed, but the sense. In those, however, of which a different translation is proposed, it is not pretended that the new rendering is more consistent with the rules of syntax, or the ordinary usage of the original language, than the old; but only that the

words *are capable of bearing it*,—that it is *possible* for them to be so translated. It seems as if writers on that side of the question, proceeded upon the principle, that the doctrine is in itself so utterly incredible, that if there be a discoverable sense of which the words are at all susceptible, that sense ought to be preferred.—I would, on this subject, remark, *in the first place*, that in every one of the instances I have referred to, in which a change of translation is attempted, there is requisite, to make out the change, some deviation, either greater or less, from the ordinary arrangement of the words in similar cases, or from the usual, if not even the uniform syntax of the original language. —*Secondly*, That any such principle as that alluded to is, in its nature and practical application, utterly inconsistent with the candour of an ingenuous mind. According to it, our inquiry is not to be, What is the plain and obvious meaning of the writer, agreeably to the ordinary and established rules of interpretation?—but, Is it possible to understand his words otherwise? Men may talk of *prejudice*: but I can conceive of few prejudices more strong, or more deceitful, than that which is involved in such a principle. It is surely a very suspicious circumstance, as to the foundation on which any system rests, when its abettors feel it necessary, formally to warn their readers "to be on their guard against what is called the natural signification of words and phrases."* Can any thing be more unfavourable to the discovery of truth? or can any thing more plainly indicate a secret dissatisfaction with ordinary rules, and an unacknowledged feeling of the need in which the system stands of some unusual modes of interpretation?

Yet on what subject should TRUTH be more seriously and devoutly the object—the simple and exclusive object, of our

* Belsham's Calm Inquiry, pp. 4, 5.

inquiry, than on one so important and so interesting as that now before us?—On such a subject, it is my sincere and earnest prayer, that I may never be left to contend *for victory.* God forbid! On points of amusing theory, and abstract speculation, we may argue for the sake of argument, and triumph in the success of our own ingenuity;—though, indeed, even on such topics, the practice, when indulged in, is by no means free from the danger of pernicious influence on the mind of the gratuitous combatant:—But for fellow-creatures to argue for victory, when the claims of Deity are involved in the question, and when all the dearest interests and sublimest hopes of mankind are at stake!—this were a prostitution of intellect, and a perversity of principle, unworthy of a rational being;—and in a being who feels and acknowledges his responsibility to the "Judge of all," an insensibility of conscience, unutterably affecting, and ominous of the most fearful results.

Let the inquiry, then, of every one of us always be, "What is truth?" and our prayer, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law."

DISCOURSE V.

ON THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

1 JOHN v. 20.

"——*his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God.*"

I PROPOSED, you will recollect, to prove, that the distinguishing NAMES, ATTRIBUTES, WORKS, and WORSHIP of the Supreme God, are all, in the Scriptures, unequivocally ascribed to Jesus Christ.

Pursuing this arrangement, I endeavoured, in last discourse, to show you, from a variety of passages, both in the Old Testament, and in the New, that the names GOD and JEHOVAH are, in their proper and highest sense, given to Christ:—and also, that he is distinctly represented as possessing the Divine attributes of ETERNAL EXISTENCE, ALMIGHTY POWER, OMNIPRESENCE, and OMNISCIENCE.

Still deferring further recapitulation, I now go on immediately to the two remaining articles of discourse.

III. We affirm, then, in the THIRD place, that WORKS are ascribed to Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, to which no being is competent but the Supreme God.

The most superficial reader of the Gospel history can hardly fail to be struck,—I do not say with the miracles themselves which Jesus is recorded to have performed—for similar wonders were wrought by the prophets before, and by the apostles after him;—but by the *peculiar manner* in which some of these miracles are described as having been

done. "He arose, and rebuked the winds, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still! and immediately there was a great calm." Do not these words remind us of that Being, of whom it is said, in the sublime language of the Psalmist: "He stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people?"* When the Redeemer performed this miracle, the persons who were in the ship were filled with amazement and dread, and said one to another, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"† Had the name of the almighty Jehovah been invoked, or in any way acknowledged, when the command was given that hushed the turbulence of the storm;—although the instantaneous suddenness of the effect could not have failed to strike them with wonder, yet the cause of the astonishment would not have been such as is here described. They could, in that case, have been at no loss, even for a moment, to account for what was done. But, "the winds and the sea OBEY HIM!" Here seems to have lain the chief cause of their amazement. They saw *a man*—in external appearance like one of themselves. Yet this man "spoke and it was done:"—spoke with the authority and the majesty of one who was conscious of having *in himself* the necessary power. And when they expressed the perplexity of their minds—as respecting a fact for which they were unable to account—saying, "What *manner* of man is this?" the true answer would have been, "He is a man, in union with Deity:—he is Immanuel, God with us."

There is nothing from which we can conceive the mind of a holy creature to revolt with deeper abhorrence, than the discovery of his having said or done any thing that could lead his fellow creatures to imagine, even for an instant, that he

* Psalm lxv. 7. † Mark iv. 39—41.

claimed *equality with God!* And the higher we ascend in the scale of being, the more strongly, we cannot but suppose, would such impression of abhorrence be felt;—so that to consider Jesus as the most exalted of created beings, instead of weakening, adds strength to this view of the argument, arising from his words and conduct while he sojourned amongst men. We should certainly have expected, that a creature of this character, feelingly alive to whatever bore the remotest resemblance to impiety, and deeply sensible that there could be no impiety, no blasphemy, so heinous, as that of seeming to claim equality with the infinite God,—had he perceived, in the minds of those with whom he conversed, the thought arising, that he seemed to be advancing such a claim, would have shuddered with instinctive horror; would have hastened to disclaim the imputation, in language of which the meaning could not be mistaken; and would sedulously have shunned every form of speech, and every mode of conduct, that could possibly countenance a supposition so inexpressibly shocking to his mind.

The application of these remarks to the case of Jesus might be illustrated by a variety of instances. I shall at present, however, notice only another incident, in addition to the one already mentioned. "There came a leper to him, doing him obeisance, and saying, Sir, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."* What is his reply to this address? Should we not expect a creature, of the character before described, to say: "If thou *wilt*, thou *canst!*—Impute not the *power* to *me*. I may be *willing* indeed; but God alone is *able*." Such was the humble spirit of his faithful apostles, when they said, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power and

* I adopt here the translation of *obeisance* for *worship*, and *Sir* for *Lord*, merely to show, that it is not on the terms of this leper's address that the stress of the present argument in any degree rests.

holiness we had made this man to walk?"—and when "they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like infirmities with yourselves."* Far different is the answer of Jesus:—"I WILL: BE THOU CLEAN!"—If Moses and Aaron were punished with exclusion from the land of promise, because they failed to sanctify the name of Jehovah, in the eyes of the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah, performing the miracle with inconsiderate passion, as if the power had resided in *themselves*—"Hear now, ye rebels, shall *we* fetch you water out of this rock?"—surely these words of Jesus must have been rebuked, as words of unparalleled presumption, by that God who "will not give his glory to another." But, in truth, there was no presumption in them. He who uttered them, although he appeared on earth in "the form of a servant," to execute a special commission, which he had voluntarily undertaken to fulfil; and although, in conformity with the official character which he had thus assumed, he speaks of "the works which he did in his Father's name, bearing witness of him that the Father had sent him;"—was, at the same time, the "Fellow of the Lord of hosts," possessing in himself underived and independent power.†

Of this you will, I trust, be more fully convinced, and your surprise will entirely cease at the manner in which such miracles as those now referred to were performed, when I have shown you, as I shall now proceed to do, that the CREATION OF ALL THINGS is one of the works ascribed in the Scriptures to Jesus Christ.

* Acts iii. 12. xiv. 15.

† In this connexion the words of the apostle Peter to Eneas, the paralytic, whose cure is recorded in the 9th chapter of the Acts, are very remarkable: "Eneas, JESUS CHRIST MAKETH THEE WHOLE." The power of his glorified Master is thus distinctly recognised by the apostle, as the immediate efficient cause of the miracle which followed. Acts ix. 34.

1.—John i. 1—3. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM; AND WITHOUT HIM WAS NOT ANY THING MADE THAT WAS MADE."

These words, say the opposers of our Lord's Divinity, ought to be translated: "All things were DONE by him, and without him was not any thing DONE that has been DONE."* "*The beginning*," say they, means the beginning *of the Christian dispensation*, or of the *ministry of Christ*;—and by "*all things*," we are to understand all things *in that dispensation*.

On this view of the passage I beg your candid attention to the following remarks.

There seems to be an obvious connexion between the expression "*In the beginning*," and the words "*All things were done by him*:" the former expressing the *time* of the latter. Now, with what propriety could it be said, that in the beginning of his ministry, or in the beginning of the Christian dispensation, all things in that dispensation were done by him? —"*The beginning*" becomes, on this hypothesis, a phrase of no definite meaning:—it is impossible to say what period of time it includes.—All things in the Christian dispensation were not, surely, done by Jesus, in the *commencement* of his own personal ministry;—are we to include, then, *the whole* of his ministry?—But it is further said—"Without him was not any thing done that was done;" which means, it is alleged, that "as all things in the Christian dispensation were done by his authority, and according to his direction; *in the ministry committed to his apostles nothing was done without his warrant.*" Is "*the beginning*," then, to be considered as comprehending

* The original words are Πάντα δι αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο· καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἕν ὃ γέγονεν.

the period of *their* ministry also?—If, on the contrary, we connect the expression "*in the beginning*," with the declaration "All things were *made* by him," and consider the writer as speaking of the original formation of the material universe, and as referring to the language of the inspired historian of the creation, at the opening of the book of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" we obtain not only a definite meaning to *each* of the phrases separately, but, at the same time, a manifest and consistent *alliance between them.*

But the word, we are reminded, here rendered "*were made*," is a word, which, although it very often occurs in the New Testament, is never used in the sense of *creation.* "It signifies *to be, to come, to become, to come to pass, to be done or transacted.*"

I shall not tax your patience by entering here into minute verbal criticism.—Two remarks will, I think, be sufficient.

1. It will not, I presume, be questioned, that, among the various general meanings of this word, it signifies not merely *to be*, but *to begin to be*,—to *come into being or existence*,—either absolutely, or in any particular state of the thing which is spoken of. Now, without entering into any critical examination of those passages where it is usually considered as signifying *to be made*, this of itself, I should think, is quite enough. For surely, when a *producing agent* is at the same time mentioned, to *come into existence by means of that agent*, amounts to much the same thing with *being made by him.*

2. It must not be overlooked, that this writer himself, in this very context, fixes the sense in which he uses it, beyond all reasonable doubt. In verse 10th, he says of Christ, the true light,—"He was in the world, and the world *was made* by him, and the world knew him not."—"The world *was made* by him," is the very same phrase in the original with

"all things *were made* by him," in the third verse.* Nothing, one should think, can be more decisive than this.—How, then, is this second passage to be disposed of? "The world *was done* by him," it is obvious, will no longer answer. An expedient, however, is at hand:—but one, of the candour of whose inventor, I honestly confess, I have not charity sufficient to persuade myself. The words here, it seems, must be rendered, by means of a supplement,—"and the world was—*enlightened*—by him!" To the merest sciolist in Greek, this translation, (if such it must be called) may be left to its own merits. But it is not, by any means, ignorance of Greek that has produced it. It is not easy for charity itself to ascribe it to any thing else than attachment to a system:—which, in so many instances, warps the judgment;—makes "the worse appear the better reason;"—disposes to the admission of any thing rather than the obnoxious doctrine;—and causes that to seem natural, which, in other circumstances, would be instantly rejected, with indignant derision. There are not a few unnecessary, and there are some injurious supplements in our ordinary English Version: but certainly there is nothing of the kind that can bear a comparison with this. I only ask any person who has learned the first elements of *English*, what he should think of a writer, who, intending to express the sentiment that the world was enlightened by Jesus Christ, should write the substantive verb, *was*, and leave the word *enlightened*, not only the principal word, but absolutely the only word by which his meaning could be determined, to be supplied by the reader! Yet this is precisely what these critics suppose the inspired historian to have done in the present instance. The difference of idiom between the English language and the Greek, can afford no

* Ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο.

refuge here; for it is utterly inconceivable, that *this* should be an admissible idiom, in any language whatever.*

Considering verse 3d then as fairly translated—agreeably to what it was the intention of the writer to express;—I have only further to observe respecting it, that the terms in which it ascribes the creation of all things to Jesus Christ, are peculiarly pointed and emphatical: "All things were made by him; and without him *was not made even one thing that was made.*"—Such is the literal rendering. And what is the necessary inference? The eyes of his understanding must be sealed by inveterate prejudice against the doctrine in question, who does not immediately perceive it. If *not one thing was made without him*, does it not incontrovertibly follow, that *he was not a created being himself?*—For if he were,—although the *first* and the *highest* of created beings, still he would himself be an exception and contradiction to the

* The proposed supplement, however, is professedly taken from the preceding verse. The two verses together, (with the supplement) stand thus: Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο (πεφωτισμένος)· καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. To this a parallel passage has been produced; the only one, it should seem, that could be found. It is Matth. xxiii. 15. "Ὅτι περιάγετε τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν, ποιῆσαι ἕνα προσήλυτον· καὶ ὅταν γένηται, ποιεῖτε αὐτὸν υἱὸν γεέννης διπλότερον ὑμῶν.—I shall leave it to the Greek reader to detect the parallelism. If there is one, it will not require to be pointed out to him.

Mr. Cappe, departing entirely from the ordinary and established meaning of διὰ, when used with a genitive case, translates—"the world was made *for* him:" and the meaning, according to him, is: He was in the world, and the world, *i. e. the Jewish dispensation*, "was made for him," *i. e.* instituted with a view to his coming, and calculated to reveal and recommend him; yet the world, *i. e.* the subjects of that dispensation, knew him not!!

Mr. Belsham says he adopts the former of these explanations, proposed by his learned and ingenious friend Dr. Carpenter, "with *some hesitation*:"—and yet afterwards, when speaking of Mr. Cappe's translation, he gives the preference to the other, because "he feels some reluctance to understand the preposition διὰ in a sense so unusual, when the construction does not require it, and a very good and *obvious* sense can be given without it."—Surely that sense cannot be very *obvious*, which has only been *proposed* in *Dr. Carpenter's* time, (I speak on Mr. B.'s authority) and which Mr. Belsham himself admits *with hesitation*.—Belsham's Calm Inquiry, pp. 35, 37. Note 20.

statement made. The apostle Paul says, respecting Christ's mediatorial dominion: "God hath put all things under his feet: but when it is said, *all things* are put under him, it is manifest that *he is excepted who did put all things under him.*" On the same obvious principle we draw our conclusion here: "When it is said, and that with such emphasis and precision, All things were made by him, it is manifest that he is excepted by whom all things were made."*

The unreasonableness of any other interpretation will appear peculiarly glaring, when this passage is compared, and taken in connexion, with others of a similar description.

2.—Col. i. 16, 17. "FOR BY HIM WERE ALL THINGS CREATED that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created BY him, and FOR him; and he is BEFORE ALL THINGS; and BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST."†

In whatever sense we understand the words of the verse preceding these, in which Jesus is spoken of as "the Image of the invisible God, the first-born of the whole creation,"‡ it is at present sufficient to say, that it must be a sense consistent with the verses quoted, which evidently refer to the same person.

And with regard to these verses, the first thing to be observed is, that we are free from the objection brought against the former passage: for here we have the word used which *is admitted properly to express the idea of* CREATION.—Is this then, as might reasonably be expected, to settle the point? No such thing. The *creation* here spoken of, it

* See Note M.

† Ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι, εἴτε κυριότητες, εἴτε ἀρχαὶ, εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται. Καὶ αὐτός ἐστι πρὸ πάντων, καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε.

‡ On these words, see Note, pp. 128, 129.

seems, is not a creation of things or beings themselves, but merely of certain states and orders of beings; not a material but a spiritual creation; not a creation of the heavens and the earth, but only of *things in* heaven, and *things in* earth:*—in short—"The creation which the apostle here ascribes to Christ, expresses that great change which was introduced into the moral world, and particularly into the relative situation of Jews and Gentiles, by the dispensation of the gospel."—Nay, more than this:—you are not to suppose that the beings, here spoken of as *created*, possess any *real existence.* By no means. They are merely the creatures of a superstitious fancy, from whose *supposed* existence the apostle borrows a figurative illustration of his subject. "This great change," it is said, "he here describes, *under the symbol of a revolution, introduced by Christ among certain ranks and orders of beings, by whom, according to the Jewish demonology, borrowed from the oriental philosophy, the affairs of states and individuals were superintended and governed!!!*"†

You will now, I presume, cease to wonder, that the opposers of our Lord's Divinity should anxiously caution their hearers and readers against the "*natural signification* of words and phrases."—If recourse to figures so wild and extravagant as this be requisite to discover the meaning of scripture, there is, indeed, abundant reason for the caution.—Suppose we should admit that "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers," referred to beings whose existence was merely imaginary—unreal phantoms, with the various orders of which heaven was supposed to be peopled, in the "crude mythology

* Dr. Priestley's language on this subject is particularly curious: "On this passage," says he, "it is obvious to remark, that the things which Christ is said to have made, are not the heavens and the earth, but only *some things* that were *in* the heavens, and *in* the earth," &c.—Hist. of Early Opinions, Vol. I. p. 65.

† Impr. Vers. Note on the Text.

of the East:"—still we have to ask, where is the alleged "*symbol of a revolution*" amongst them? There is not a word about *revolution*, or the slightest allusion to it in the passage. It is *creation*, and creation alone, that is mentioned;—the creation of "all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible;"—the bringing of all these things into existence:—and it is language which all the ingenuity of criticism cannot explain away. How mournful is it that such ingenuity should ever have been employed!—Surely, if we were to set ourselves to devise terms, for the express purpose of conveying, as explicitly and unequivocally as possible, the idea of *supreme divinity*, we should find it difficult to select any better fitted for our design than those which are used in these verses. What could we say more, than that "by him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; he is before all things; and by him all things consist?" —If that Being, BY whom all things were created, FOR whom all things were created, who is BEFORE ALL THINGS, and BY WHOM ALL THINGS CONSIST, be not the Supreme God,—we may well ask, "Is there a God at all?" if there be, how shall we describe, how shall we distinguish him?

Why, then, refuse assent to declarations so plain, and so pointed?—Why reject the obvious and literal meaning of such expressions, and prefer one of which the very mention shows it to be so far-fetched and unnatural, so utterly subversive of every principle of just and ingenuous criticism, that the same mode of interpretation, if applied generally, would enable us, with ease, to solve the problem, of *bringing any required sense out of any given words.*

But our proof of this point is not yet finished.—We have found an objection taken, as to the passage first quoted,

against the particular word used in it, as not properly signifying *creation.*—In the next, as we have seen, the word *is* used which is allowed to signify creation; but it is objected, that the creation of which it speaks is not that of the heavens and the earth themselves, but of *things in heaven,* and *things in earth;* not a material, but a spiritual creation.—Unreasonable as these objections appear, yet let us see, whether we have not creation ascribed to Jesus *in the precise form required;*—the creation of the heavens and the earth themselves:—

3.—Heb. i. 10, 11.—"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THY HANDS. They shall perish, but thou remainest; yea all of them shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and of thy years there is no end."

I have formerly shown, that these words are here introduced as an address to THE SON:—that the context clearly determines this; and that, otherwise understood, they have no natural or proper bearing upon the writer's object.*

Now, if this be the case, (and, as I before remarked, I can imagine nothing clearer) the point is settled. For I must be allowed to take for granted, that if the quotation *is* so applied, it is *correctly* applied. I have, for the present, no argument with those, who may have gone so very far, with some of the leaders of Unitarianism, as to charge the New Testament writers, and particularly the author of this epistle, with unappropriate applications of scripture, far-fetched analogies, and bungled and inconclusive reasonings.

I have only to add, on this part of the subject, that while creation is thus repeatedly, and in the plainest terms, ascribed

* See pp. 118—120.

to Jesus Christ, the Scriptures give no countenance to the idea, of his executing this work, as a subordinate agent, a mere instrument, inferior to Jehovah.—The very terms, indeed, in some of the passages already quoted, themselves preclude every such supposition. They are *universal.* The creator of *all things*, of *all created beings*, cannot be himself a creature; —cannot, therefore, be, in any sense, or in any respect, an inferior agent to the Supreme God. He who is *not a creature* must be GOD: and God is ONE.—This idea is strongly confirmed by such expressions as the following in the prophecies of Isaiah:—"Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. *My hand* also hath laid the foundations of the earth, and *my right hand* hath spanned the heavens:"—"Thus saith Jehovah thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb; I am Jehovah, that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself.*"*

Allusion has been made, in the course of the preceding illustrations, to the *new creation.* I might now, with propriety and effect, enlarge on this subject; and show, from the Scriptures, that it is as truly a peculiar work of God,—the effect, in all its branches, of Divine energy, from the regeneration of the sinner to his final reception to glory,—as the creation of the material universe. Interesting, however, as the views are, which this department of the argument presents to the Christian mind, I must forbear:—and shall proceed to the consideration of certain other works, which are ascribed to him in the capacity of Mediator; and to which he is not, and cannot be, competent, unless considered as truly GOD.

On the principle of *selection*, I shall confine myself to two

* Isaiah xlviii. 13. xliv. 24. See Note N.

—the GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD, and the FINAL JUDGMENT.

That these works *are* ascribed to Jesus in his exalted state, no consistent believer of the Bible can entertain a doubt.—In the immediate prospect of ascending to the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, he said himself to his disciples: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—"He is Lord of all;" "Lord of the living and the dead;" "exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, both in this world, and in that which is to come—having all things put in subjection under his feet."*—And a part of the exercise of his sovereign dominion, is the administration of judgment, at the great day of final retribution. The testimonies of the Word of God on this point are many and explicit. "We shall all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ:"—"God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead:"—"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father: he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him:—he hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man:"—"He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify, that it is he who was ordained of God, to be the judge of living and dead:"—"I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom:"—"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the

* Matth. xxviii. 18. Acts x. 36. Rom. xiv. 9. Eph. i. 20—22.

throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall THE KING say to them on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world:'—then shall he say also to them on his left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into everlasting life."*

Figurative language is a convenient, and therefore a favourite resort, of the opposers of our Lord's Divinity.—Plain and express as these ascriptions of dominion and judgment to Jesus Christ appear to be, they are all, on this principle of interpretation, by some Unitarians, readily set aside. His advancement, in his state of exaltation, to the government of the world, is pronounced "a notion unscriptural and most incredible." All that is said on this subject, it is alleged, means "not the personal authority of our Divine Master, but the prevalence of his religion in the world:"—"and a consistent Unitarian, acknowledging Jesus as a man in all respects "like unto his brethren," regards his kingdom as entirely of a spiritual nature, and as consisting in the empire of his gospel over the hearts and lives of its professors."†—And as to his "judging the living and the dead at his appearing and kingdom," while difficulty is felt and acknow-

* Rom. xiv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10. Acts xvii. 31. John v. 22, 23, 27. Acts x. 42. 2 Tim. iv. 1. Matth. xxv. 31—46.

† Belsham's Review of Wilberforce, p. 74.—Calm Inquiry, pp. 319, 320. —"Agreeably to the prejudices and imaginations of Jews and Gentiles, the subjection of all mankind to the rules of piety and virtue delivered by Christ, is shadowed out under the imagery of a mighty king, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth," &c.—Lindsey's Sequel, p. 473. as quoted by Mr. Belsham in a note, p. 321. of Calm Inquiry.

ledged, and a great deal is said with a view to remove, or at least to alleviate it, it is at last "conjectured, that when Christ is represented as appointed by God to judge the world, nothing more may be intended by this language, but that the final states of all and every individual of mankind *shall be awarded agreeably to the declarations of the gospel!*"*

In such a principle of interpretation, when applied to this extent, there is this peculiar convenience, that it precludes, in a great degree, the possibility of refutation. When one text of scripture is alleged to have a figurative and not a literal meaning, the only effectual method of detecting and exposing the misinterpretation, is a comparison of it with other passages, of a kindred description, which, from their connexion, are evidently intended to be literally understood.—But when a whole series of texts, so plain and pointed as those which have been quoted, are asserted, or conjectured, to be entirely figurative;—what are we to do? We have no *plainer* texts to which we can refer, in the way of comparison and mutual illustration:—no passages more evidently literal, to prove the alleged figurative ones to be literal also. We can do nothing, in such a case, but leave the texts to the impartial judgment of the candid reader of the Scriptures. I shall do so, in the present instance, with one general observation:—that if such are the principles according to which the Bible is to be interpreted, the careless infidel is furnished with the most plausible apology which can be urged for declining the trouble of examining it;—that there is no possibility of arriving at any certain knowledge of its contents.

But all this authority, it is further replied, even on the supposition of its being really possessed and exercised by our Lord in person, is represented as *given to him;* as not original

* Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 345.

and inherent, but *imparted* and *delegated;* which, it is alleged, is quite inconsistent with the idea of his own supreme underived Godhead.

Let us examine this a little.

In the first place: The ordinary solution of such apparent difficulties, is a perfectly valid one. There is no incongruity in the idea of delegated authority and dominion, when Jesus is viewed as a *Divine Mediator.* Those who maintain this view of his person and character acknowledge such delegation, as an essential article of their scheme. Believing him to be represented in the Scriptures as voluntarily assuming the form, and acting in the capacity, of a servant, they are not startled at finding this representation consistently supported throughout. In perfect harmony, therefore, with this view of his relation to the Father in the work of redemption, they consider all that he did as done *by appointment,* and all that he received, in his exaltation to glory, as received in the form of *reward;* —and the reward they account singularly appropriate, consisting, as it does, in his investiture, as Mediator, with the administration of that peculiar branch of the Divine Government, which has for its immediate object, the completion of the glorious effects resulting from the work of salvation which he finished when on earth.—Admit the principle, of his acting, in the scheme of redeeming mercy, in the voluntarily assumed capacity of a servant; and all is plain:—instead of disorder, embarrassment, and difficulty, we have a perfect plan, not only interesting in its design, and glorious in its consequences, but consistent and harmonious in all its arrangements; "well ordered in all things and sure."

But *in the second place:* There is another view of this subject, which appears to me perfectly free from fallacy, and decisive of the question.—*Delegation,* let it be remembered, *cannot confer any ability for the discharge of the functions of the office*

delegated. It may bestow *title* and *right;* but it can communicate no *capacity*, no actual *qualification.* We may suppose a child of a year old invested with the official titles and honours of the Lord Chancellor of England:—but will such investiture *qualify* the babe for the fulfilment of the duties attached to that high and important office? I need not answer the question.

It is vain, then, to talk of *delegation.* If Jesus Christ be, indeed, LORD OF ALL, and JUDGE OF ALL, what, I ask, are the qualifications essential to the Being who governs and who is to judge the world?—And to this question I answer, without fear of contradiction by any reasonable and unprejudiced mind, OMNISCIENCE, OMNIPOTENCE, and INDEPENDENCE.—That the world cannot be *governed*, and cannot be *judged*, by any being who does not possess these attributes,—although the theme is tempting as a field for interesting declamation,—it were certainly a waste of time to detain you by a formal and lengthened proof. He must be sadly pressed by the necessity of a system, who can feel a moment's hesitation in acknowledging this. Suppose it admitted, for argument's sake, that "the power and knowledge of the Judge of the world need not be supposed to extend beyond the world over which he presides;"—let us for a moment consider what the extent of this knowledge must be.—It must comprehend a perfect and unerring acquaintance with all the thoughts and words and actions, in all their endless variety of circumstances, of every individual person of all the numberless generations of mankind that shall have existed from the beginning to the end of time; and in every successive moment of the existence of each.—The question, then, is, Is it possible that *this* knowledge can belong to any being, and that being *not be God?*—When we infer from the works of creation which we see, that their Maker is *infinite in wisdom*,

our *data* are *limited*, yet our inference is *unlimited*. Is it, then, admitted to be fair, to conclude from a part to the whole? from what we see and know of the universe to the universe itself? and then, from an effect which must, in the nature of things, be *limited*, to deduce the *un*limited, or *infinite*, wisdom of the CAUSE?—If it be, then I ask further; —If any being is admitted to possess the knowledge of mankind which has just been described, are we not warranted to proceed on the same established principle of reasoning, and from this measure of knowledge to infer, that it cannot stop here;—that it must extend further? Are not our *data* as good, in *this* case, as in the *former*? In both, we are supposed to know to a limited extent; and if, in the one case, an unlimited inference be warrantable, so must it also be in the other: and, on the other hand, if the GOVERNOR and JUDGE may possess the knowledge described, and, after all, his knowledge be limited, I see not how the consequence can be evaded, that the FORMER OF ALL THINGS may have produced all the striking proofs of wisdom in the universe, and after all, his *wisdom* be *limited*.

But further: let us think for an instant of the *government* of the world. If our argument required additional strength, it finds it here.—No person, who at all considers what the government of this world is, can suppose it conducted by any other than *an omniscient Being*, without forfeiting his claim to the possession of understanding. Apart entirely from what relates to the movements and variations of the *material* world, the government of *mankind* implies an incessant and entire acquaintance with all the thoughts, and words, and actions, of all the millions of men in every part of the globe, every successive moment of time;—together with the sovereign and universal command of whatever can contribute to affect the volitions of intelligent creatures;—an infallible previous

knowledge of the effects which the occurrence of particular circumstances, or the suggestion of particular views, will produce on the will of every individual. The multitude of mankind is so great; the variety of character among them so endless; their connexions, and interests, so prodigiously diversified; their desires and volitions so incessantly crossing and interfering; great and small events are so involved in one another, so linked together, in an infinite diversity of ways, as reciprocal causes and effects;—that we are utterly lost in our attempts to form any conception of such a control, —even with the full conviction upon our minds, of its being the control of an omniscient Being. But, to suppose this government conducted by a mere creature, in the exercise of derived, and limited, and dependant knowledge and power!— you must pardon me for not saying all that I think of such a supposition.—I presume, however, I may safely affirm, that he must be sadly pressed by his system who is reduced to the necessity of making and defending it.* If it be so, then, that the Governor and Judge of the world must be an *omniscient*, *omnipotent*, and *independent* being:—and if it be so, as the Scriptures testify, that the Father *judgeth no man*, but hath committed *all judgment* unto the Son; does it not follow, as an immediate and irresistible consequence, that *the Son is such a Being?*

To complete this argument, it must be further observed;— that if such qualities must be possessed by the governor and judge of the world, they must, from their nature, be *original* and *inherent*. They are entirely unsusceptible of *transference* or *communication*.—*Independence* is so, beyond all contradiction. And to imagine, because a certain portion of such knowledge as is usually beyond the reach of human pene-

* See Note O.

tration, has, at times, been imparted to men by Him who knoweth all things,—and a certain measure of extraordinary power conferred on creatures by Him who can do all things, —that therefore the transference or communication is supposable of *omniscience* or *omnipotence*;*—it requires only to bring the terms together, to show the contradiction which the supposition involves:—an OMNISCIENT AND OMNIPOTENT CREATURE! or, if you will—for the absurdity is equally great —TWO OMNISCIENT AND OMNIPOTENT BEINGS, AND YET THE ONE DEPENDANT ON THE OTHER!—On this supposition, we may, it seems, arrive at the conclusion that a being is omniscient and omnipotent, and yet remain uncertain whether that being be God!

IV. If you have followed me distinctly in the proof of the Divinity of the Saviour, from the ascription to him of the *Names*, *Attributes*, and *Works* of Deity, you will not be surprised to find him represented in scripture, as the proper object of that WORSHIP, which cannot, without impious idolatry, be addressed to any other being than the Supreme God.—The proofs, at the same time, that this is the case, form an additional and distinct branch of the evidence of his Godhead.—This, you will recollect, is the fourth and last part of my subject.

The instances of obeisance done to Christ, while he appeared as a man on the earth, I do not particularly notice, because, in the greater number at least of these instances, the kind and degree of intended homage cannot with certainty be ascertained.—I pass them, with one general remark. In some of

* In reasoning against the Arians, who suppose the power of creation communicated to the Logos, although himself a created being, Dr. Priestley says, with great justice:—"Why might not the power of *self-subsistence* be imparted to another, as well as that of *creating out of nothing?*" History of Early Opinions, p. 77.

these instances, as must strike every reader of the Gospel history, there is so strong a resemblance, so very near an approach to Divine worship, that we should have expected a creature actuated by such principles as were formerly described, tenderly alive to a sense of his infinite inferiority, and jealous of the glory of the God that sent him, to have said, on such occasions, as the apostle Peter did to Cornelius—"Stand up: I myself also am a man;" or as the angel to John, when he fell at his feet to worship him;—"See thou do it not—worship God."—Nothing of this kind, however, is to be found in the life of Christ, as recorded by the Evangelists. He accepts all the homage that is offered him, without a hint of its impropriety, or the slightest monitory intimation of his equality in nature with the persons by whom it is paid.

This observation might be applied with peculiar force to the words of Thomas, the incredulous disciple, addressed to his Master, when the evidence which he had required of the reality of his resurrection, was vouchsafed to him:—"Then saith Jesus to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God."*—The question respecting these words is, whether they are to be understood as a *confession*, or an *exclamation*.—That, when taken simply by themselves, they *may* be understood in the latter of these senses, it is needless to deny. Nor do I feel disposed to lay so much stress as has been generally laid upon the objection urged against this interpretation, derived from its supposed impiety: because it depends greatly on the magnitude of the occasion, and the peculiar state of mind of the speaker, whether such exclamation should be charged

* John xx. 27, 28.

with impiety, or justified as the appropriate utterance of sudden and overpowering, yet serious and devout emotion.—Neither do I think that the style of our Lord's reply, "because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed,"—is, of itself, sufficient evidence that the words of Thomas must be understood as an address to Christ, and as a confession of his faith: because, in such circumstances, an exclamation of devout astonishment is itself a confession of faith; or, in other words, a declaration of full conviction.—But there are two considerations which satisfy me, that the words were a direct address to Jesus, and that it is most unnatural and arbitrary to interpret them otherwise.—1*st*, When the other disciples assured Thomas of their Master's resurrection, they said to him, "We have seen THE LORD."—Thomas, when his incredulity is subsequently overcome, confesses him in the same character—"MY LORD."—Had he said no more, I presume there would never have been any dispute about the meaning of his address. Yet nothing can well be clearer than that the two titles, "*My Lord*," and "*my God*," are both given to the same person. To separate them, as some have actually proposed, and consider the former as addressed to Christ, and the latter to the Father, is what no man could be led to do, but by the perverting influence of systematic prejudice. If "*my Lord*" was addressed to Christ, as all the circumstances of the case compel us to admit, so, beyond all reasonable controversy, was, "*my God*."—2*dly*, That the Evangelist, who relates the circumstance, understood the words as addressed to Christ, is very evident from the style in which he records it:—"Thomas *answered and said unto him*, My Lord, and my God."—He "*answered and said unto him*." Is this the manner in which any writer would record an exclamation of astonishment?—Jesus *said to Thomas*, "——be not faithless, but believing:" and Thomas answered, and *said to him*, "My

Lord, and my God."—I do not know if there be any mode of expression by which the historian could have conveyed the idea that this address was to Christ, more explicitly than he has done.*—Now if the words were addressed to Christ—nay if there was even a possibility of their being so understood, the principles above stated would apply in all their force. A mere human prophet, faithful to the honour of the God from whom he had his commission, would have warned his mistaken follower, and all who heard him, to beware of fancying that he possessed any dignity that could entitle him to such an address. His heart would have been chilled at the very thought; and he would have been distressed till he got the warning uttered.—But nothing of this kind appears:—"Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed:—blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Let me now direct your attention to a few passages of scripture, in which Divine worship is either authorized, or obviously addressed, to the Saviour in his exalted state.

I begin with a class of passages, in which the phrase *calling on the name of Christ*—or *calling on the name of the Lord*, occurs.

Of these passages you may look first to Rom. x. 11—13.

* There is a passage, indeed, in 1 Sam. xx. 12. which may seem, at first view, in opposition to these remarks. In our English translation it stands thus:—"And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time, or the third day, and behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee, the Lord do so, and much more to Jonathan," &c. Here the words "Jonathan *said unto David*," are followed by an address to God, "*O Lord God of Israel*," while yet David is evidently spoken *to* in the subsequent part of the verse.—This, however, is very unnatural: and the marginal reading seems to be, as it is on some other occasions also, much preferable.—"And Jonathan said unto David, Jehovah, the God of Israel,—when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time, or the third day, and behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee,—Jehovah do so and much more to Jonathan," &c.

"For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that CALL UPON HIM: for whosoever shall CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD shall be saved."—It is evident that in the preceding context *Christ* is spoken of, as the *subject of apostolic testimony*, and the *object of the faith* of all who receive that testimony. And by comparing what is added in verse 14th, it is indisputably manifest, that HE is "the Lord" spoken of in the verses which have just been quoted:—"How, then, shall they *call on him* in whom they have *not believed?* and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"—Whether the editors of the Improved Version of the New Testament conceived, that superficial readers might not immediately think of *Christ* being meant by "*the Lord*" in this passage, and that therefore there was less danger in allowing the phrase "*calling on the name* of the Lord" to stand unaltered, I cannot tell: but so it is, that unaltered they *have* allowed it, in this instance, to stand.—They have also translated the same phrase in the same manner in Acts ii. 21. where the same quotation is introduced, from the prophecy of Joel—"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall *call on the name of the Lord* shall be saved."—Yet in the texts which I am about to quote, the phraseology in the original is precisely the same:—why the translation should be different, it is not very difficult to conjecture.—Before noticing these, however, it is worth while to observe, that in the passage now before us, we have a *double* proof of the Godhead of our blessed Redeemer. We have seen, that it is of *him* the apostle speaks. To *him*, therefore, this inspired writer applies the words of the prophet:—"It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of JEHOVAH shall be delivered:"—so that Jesus is here distin-

guished by the incommunicable Name of the God of Israel, and at the same time pointed out as the proper object of religious invocation.

The following are the passages alluded to, in which the phraseology of the original is the same, but which are otherwise translated in the Improved Version of the New Testament.—Acts ix. 14. "And here he hath authority from the chief priests, to bind all that *call on thy name*:"*—Acts ix. 21. "Is not this he who destroyed them that *called on this name* in Jerusalem?"†—Acts xxii. 16. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of the Lord.*"‡—1 Cor. i. 2.—"To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*,§ both theirs and ours."—In all these passages, the construction of the words in the original is the very same as in those quoted from the 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the 2d of the book of Acts; it is the construction which is invariably employed in the New Testament, and in the Septuagint translation of the Old, wherever the verb used signifies to *invoke;* and to translate them otherwise, is an arbitrary departure from the ordinary practice of the language.——In every instance in which *being called by the name of the Lord* is clearly intended, the phraseology is different: and there is, therefore, every reason to conclude, that, in the instances in dispute, had it been the intention of the writers to express the idea of being "called by the name of the Lord," their phraseology would not have been what it is.

* Impr. Vers. "who are called by thy name."

† Ib. "that call themselves after this name."

‡ "Ib. taking upon thyself his name."

§ Ib. "are called by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The received translation is also fully justified, by various express instances of such invocation of the name of Jesus; by which the practice of the apostles and primitive Christians is further ascertained.

1.—1 Thess. iii. 11—13. "Now God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

In the first of these verses, Jesus is acknowledged, in connexion with God the Father, as ordering the events of providence.—"*The Lord*," in the verse which follows, is evidently the same Lord as in verse 11th, namely, "the Lord Jesus Christ:" and he is thus owned, and addressed, as the author and perfecter of all Christian graces in the hearts of his people.

2.—2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. "Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

Nothing, surely, can be more plain and decisive than this. —Are we to suppose, that a mere man, or even the most exalted of creatures, is here associated with the Most High God, in a solemn prayer for the communication of comfort and stability to the Christians at Thessalonica?—and not only associated with him, but, in the order of address, *put before him*?—He who can bring himself to believe this, may, without either scruple or inconsistency, join in the worship of departed saints and martyrs, and that in a much higher sense than the church of Rome professes to do.—But, on the contrary, he

who, in the worship which he addresses to God the Father, refuses to join the name of the Lord Jesus, as an object of equal adoration, refuses Divine honours to one, whom this inspired Ambassador of Heaven considered as entitled to them, and to whom, in his own practice, he uniformly ascribed them.

3.—2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. "For this thing, I besought THE LORD thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me."

It requires only the reading of these verses, to show that *the Lord*, in the 8th, to whom Paul presented his supplication for deliverance from trouble, is the same with *Christ*, in the 9th, in whose promised strength he confides and triumphs. This is as plain as language can make it. "I besought THE LORD," says he:—"HE," that is THE LORD, "said unto me, MY STRENGTH is made perfect in weakness:"—"I will, therefore, glory in my infirmities, that the POWER OF CHRIST may rest upon me."—It is granted by Unitarians (for how indeed could it be denied?) that this is an instance of supplication addressed to Christ. But it is alleged as probable, that when Paul besought him, he was, either in vision or in person, present with the apostle.—Well;—let this be supposed, and what then? It is still *to Christ* that he addresses his supplication for deliverance;—it is *Christ* that *does* deliver him;—it is the *power of Christ* in which he glories. Unitarians tell us, that, in our veneration and love for *Christ*, we forget what is due to *the Father*. But truly, if Christ was not God, there is, in this thrice-repeated prayer of the apostle, something which it will not be easy to vindicate from the charge of idolatrous forgetfulness of the Father Almighty.—The mere circumstance, however, of a reply being made "in distinct terms"

by "the Lord" to his servant, affords no conclusive evidence of his presence with him at the time, either personally or in vision. The inspired communications made to the holy prophets are almost always introduced in similar terms—"The Lord said unto me,"—"The word of the Lord came unto me," &c.; while there is no reason to suppose either personal or visionary appearance. The answer was, in all probability, imparted *to his mind, by revelation*, in a way of which we, who have had no experience of it, can form no distinct conception. —He besought the Lord *thrice*. Was it *in vision, each of the three times?* Did the apostle just catch the opportunities afforded by Jesus appearing to him, to present his prayer to him,—while, *at other times*, he prayed to the Father, and never to Christ? Did he previously, and in the intervals, pray to the Father; and, not succeeding, seize the occasion of presenting his suit to the Son,—a fellow creature who had influence with God? Or rather, is not this instance of prayer, addressed to Jesus *alone*, in perfect harmony with the other passages, in which he is addressed *in conjunction with the Father?*

4.—In addition to these passages, might be adduced, the *forms of benediction* with which the Epistles generally open or conclude, and which cannot be viewed in any other light than as brief prayers for the Divine blessing on the churches and individuals to whom they are addressed:—Ephes. vi. 23. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!"—2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all! Amen!"—2 John 3. "Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love!"

5.—We have before seen, that the Christians were early distinguished, both among themselves, and in the world, by

the description of "*those that called on the name of Jesus Christ.*"—Paul, then, did not stand alone, as a worshipper of Jesus.—We have a remarkable and affecting instance of another saint's practice in Acts vii. 59, 60. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon (God) and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."—The name of GOD, in the first of these verses, is supplementary. The supplement is improper; nor does it, in the slightest degree, affect the argument afforded by the passage. The prayers were addressed to JESUS: and *Jesus* should have been the supplementary word.—It is needless here to prove the fact of such address: it is not denied; nor does it admit of any question.

But with regard to this, and similar passages, it has been said, in the form of a general objection, of which the principle indeed has already been applied to a former passage:—"*This address of Stephen to Jesus, when he actually saw him, does not authorize us to offer prayers to him, now that he is invisible.*"*

This is truly strange ground. It is the ground, however, which is taken; and we must give it a few moments' notice.

Observe, then, *in the first place:*—There is no sufficient evidence of the supposed fact of *actual vision.*—Even the vision described as seen by Stephen in the Council Hall (verses 55, 56.) I think there is every reason to believe, was only a vision of *strong faith:*—a *mental* vision, imparted by the powerful energy of the Holy Spirit, with which at the time he was filled.†—But at any rate, whether this opinion be well or ill

* Improved Version of the New Testament: Note on the place.—In this solution, with some slight variations, Unitarian expositors seem universally to agree.

† Thus Ezekiel describes a vision of the glory of Jehovah, which was seen by him, while he *sat in his house, and the elders of Judah sat before him.* See Ezek. viii. 1—4. A variety of similar examples might be produced.—In the

founded, that vision was seen in the place of assembly. It was now at an end: nor is there the slightest evidence that it was at this time repeated.

2*dly.* Suppose it to have been a *real ocular vision;* and suppose it also to have been repeated:—of what was it a vision? of Jesus Christ *at hand?*—within reach of an immediate application by the voice?—"He saw," the record says, "the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." It was a vision, then, of the glory of Jesus in the place of his exaltation—in the third heavens. But how, at this immense distance, was the voice of the expiring martyr to reach a human ear? Surely the voice could enter no ear there, but the ear of him who hears, at the same moment, "all that in every place call upon his name;" and to whose audience immeasurable distance is no interruption.—But it may, perhaps, be said, that as there was a miracle in the vision, there might be a miracle also in the hearing of the prayer. I remark, therefore,

3*dly.* It seems passing strange, that the circumstance of actual vision should be considered by any, as at all altering

following most singular passage, Dr. Priestley seems to favour the idea of Stephen's vision having been only a superficial impression on his mind; while yet he draws from it the same inference against the prayer's being pleaded as a precedent: "To conclude as some have done, from the single instance of Stephen"—(the *single instance!*)—"that all Christians are authorized to pray to Christ, is like concluding that all matter has a tendency to go upward, because a needle will do so when a magnet is held over it. When they shall be in the same circumstances with Stephen, having *their minds strongly impressed* with a vision of Christ sitting at the right hand of God, they may then, perhaps,"—(*perhaps!*—even although supposed in *the same circumstances:*—is it, then, doubtful, after all, whether Stephen was *right* in praying to Jesus?)—"they may then, perhaps, be authorized to address themselves to him as he did: *but the whole tenor of the scriptures* shows, that otherwise we have *no authority at all* for any such practice." Hist. of Early Opinions, vol. I. p. 47.—The *candour* of the bold and sweeping assertion with which this extract concludes, the reader is left to appreciate from the passages already quoted, and those which still remain to be mentioned.

the nature of the case.—Are we to conclude, then, that a creature, a mere man, may, in particular circumstances, be a proper object of prayer and religious worship?—that when *seen* he may be prayed to; but when *unseen* the prayer must be withheld as idolatry! Does the mere circumstance of his being *visible* impart a transient Divinity, and a momentary title to the honours of Godhead—a Divinity and a title, lasting only while the vision lasts?—Can *visibility* or *invisibility* change the nature of a creature, deifying for the time a *mere son of man*?—Surely the weakness and inconsistency of such ground as this, must be felt by every mind that remains open to conviction on this most important subject.

We cannot conceive to ourselves a more solemn act of worship, than that which is implied in a dying man's commending his departing soul to the Being who is the object of his address;—and from the same Being to whom he commends himself, interceding, with the same breath, for forgiveness to his murderous enemies!—The very prayers which Jesus, in the human nature, addressed to the Father, Stephen here addresses, in similar circumstances, to the Son.—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"—"Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit!"—So prayed the dying Redeemer to his Divine Father. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!"—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"—So prayed the dying martyr to his Divine Saviour and Lord.—Yet the Unitarian hypothesis supposes, not only that these solemn petitions were, in the latter case, presented to a mere creature; but that even when God and Jesus were *seen together*, (for in the vision, Jesus appeared standing on the right hand of God)—the prayer was turned away from *God*, and addressed to *man*!

Enough, surely, has been said, to expose the fallacy of the objection. It might, however, be added, that in the passages

formerly quoted there is abundant evidence, that it was not always at times when Jesus appeared in vision to his servants, that he was addressed as the object of prayer. The silent breathings of Paul's heart ascended to his Saviour, even at the moment when he was writing his Epistles, in warm and earnest intercession for the Christian brethren to whom he wrote.

Thus have we seen, that, in the New Testament Scriptures, Christians are described and distinguished by their "calling on the name of the Lord Jesus;"—and that there are various and most conclusive instances, of their applying to him in prayer, for providential direction in their ways;—for deliverance from trouble;—for all descriptions of spiritual blessing to themselves and others; forgiveness of sins; inward peace and consolation; increase of love; progress in holiness; establishment in every good word and work, even unto final perfection;—for reception at death, and admission to eternal happiness.

Let me now close this series of proofs, by directing your attention, for a few minutes, to that most sublime and overpowering vision, described in the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation:—where we have the worship exhibited, which is paid, by Angels and redeemed men, to GOD and THE LAMB:—and in which the whole creation is represented as uniting;—"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. And he came, and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures, and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having

every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing! And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, even all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever! And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

After reading such a passage as this, can we retain a doubt, whether the Being who is thus represented as receiving the very same expressions of adoration and praise with the Eternal Jehovah;—of unqualified adoration,—of everlasting praise;—be himself more than a creature?—Let those who deny the Divinity of Christ, from professed concern for the glory of the only true God, seriously consider, how far they really consult the honour of that God, when they suppose one of his creatures thus partaking with him the same universal and eternal glory and praise!

But we are reminded, that this is entirely a "*visionary scene*:"—that "the homage is paid to a symbolical represen-

"tation of Christ, by symbolical persons, as visibly present "with him; and that this cannot justify the actual worship of "Christ, when he is not visible."

To part of this wild objection an answer has already been returned. I would only further remind those who urge it, that in such emblematical visions, they must be fully aware, the *nature* of the beings represented, and their *relations* respectively to each other, cannot be considered as undergoing any change; but must remain precisely the same. Such scenic exhibitions accord with the truth and reality of things. The reason why Christ, in the vision, appears, and is worshipped, under the symbol of a "Lamb as it had been slain," is strikingly apparent to every one who remembers the language of the Baptist, "Behold the LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sins of the world;"—and who credits the declarations of the Scriptures concerning him, as the Divine Redeemer, who assumed our nature, and made atonement for sin by the shedding of his blood. And if the circumstance of symbolical representation destroys the conclusiveness of the inference as to the worship of Jesus Christ, it must be allowed to have the same fatal application to the other Divine person in the vision: because the infinite and invisible God is here also symbolically represented, as seated on a throne, and as receiving the same adoration from the same symbolical worshippers.—The worshippers, besides, are not all symbolical. The vision represents "*every creature*, in heaven and earth, and under the earth, and in the sea," as joining in the anthem of praise. Surely, by such representation, the *objects* of the adoration are both alike excluded from the number of creatures. He cannot be a creature, whom all creatures adore.

But we are further referred, for a parallel case, to 1 Chronicles xxix. 20. "And David said to all the congregation,

Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and *worshipped the Lord and the King.*"

But *are* the two cases at all parallel? David said, "Now bless Jehovah your God." Did he intend, that the people should associate himself with Jehovah in the same act of religious adoration? Certainly not:—nor were they guilty of so gross and impious a profanation. When it is said, "they *worshipped* the Lord and the King," a general word is used, in its general or indefinite sense. And although the expression may sound somewhat strangely, yet knowing, as we do, that the word denotes various kinds and degrees of homage or reverence, according to the nature and dignity of the object addressed, we feel no difficulty in instantly applying to it, in reference to GOD and to the KING, its different modifications of meaning.* The word *worship* stands here in the same circumstances with its opposite *blasphemy*, when it is said, by the witnesses suborned, at the instigation of Jezebel, against Naboth the Jezreelite, "Naboth hath *blasphemed God and the King.*" In neither case do we feel in the least degree at a loss. But in the case to which this has been adduced as a parallel, we have the very same act of worship, expressed in the very same words, addressed equally to "Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." The cases would have come nearer to parallelism, and the inference in question might have been justified, had it been recorded, that David appeared between the cherubim, in the place of the Divine presence, by the side of the glorious Shechinah;—and that

* The English word *worship* has this general signification. See Johnson's Dictionary. An instance of its lower application, as signifying *civil respect and deference*, occurs Luke xiv. 10 "Then shalt thou have *worship* in the presence of those that sit at meat with thee."—The same general principle of reply is perfectly applicable to other cases of a similar kind: such as Exod. xiv. 31. 1 Sam. xii. 18. 2 Chron. xxxi. 8. 1 Thess. ii. 10.

the people, bowing their heads, and worshipping the Lord and the King, united them in one doxology, saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, and unto David the king, for ever and ever! Amen!"—But our minds revolt, with indignant loathing, from suppositions so unseemly;—so degrading to the infinite Majesty of heaven and earth;—to that God who "will not give his glory to another."

In the vision, then, of which I have read, in your hearing, the inspired description,—a vision so full of impressive sublimity, we behold, in the adoration of the Lamb, the Divine injunction obeyed, and its meaning thus practically illustrated:—"AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM!"*

I have thus fulfilled my design;—which was, to lay before you such evidence as appeared to my own mind fully satisfactory, that the NAMES, the ATTRIBUTES, the WORKS, and the WORSHIP, exclusively belonging to the One Supreme God, are, in the Scriptures, unequivocally ascribed to JESUS CHRIST.

To the promised recapitulation of the whole argument on this most momentous subject, I could not now do justice, without taxing to excess, both the patience of my hearers, and my own strength. There are, besides, some further observations, of a general nature, which still remain to be made; but which cannot, for the same reason, be introduced, with propriety, at this time.—The recapitulation, along with these, and a few words of practical improvement, will form the substance of another discourse.

* Heb. i. 6.

DISCOURSE VI.

ON THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT IN THE THREE PRECEDING DISCOURSES, WITH CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

1 JOHN v. 20.

"——*his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God.*"

I HAVE now, in three discourses, endeavoured to establish, by a direct appeal to the Scriptures, the great doctrine of the Supreme Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is my design, in this discourse, briefly to recapitulate their contents, and to conclude the subject with a few additional general observations.

In the first of these discourses, I began by pointing out the vast importance of the doctrine in question;—as apparent, 1*st*, in *its own nature:* it is a doctrine of which the simple statement is of itself sufficient to show, that if it be a truth, it must necessarily be one of essential consequence:—2*dly*, in *its connexion with the first and highest class of our duties;* the admission of it, if false, implying the guilt of direct idolatry; and the denial of it, if true, the refusal of divine honours to the true God:—3*dly*, in *the intimate relation which it bears to other truths;* as forming one in a harmonious system of doctrines, which must stand or fall along with it.

I then proceeded to observe, (as on the subject of the Trinity in general) that, with regard to this momentous

doctrine, the *fact* alone is revealed, and not the *mode* of the fact; and that the former alone is, therefore, the object of our faith.—That the fact is mysterious, was fully admitted:—but there is nothing in it, I observed, more incomprehensible, than in the mystery of the Divine *omnipresence*;—in the nature of that relation, which we affirm to subsist, between an infinite Being and any limited portion of space, when we say of such a Being, *He is* HERE.—All that we affirm, I noticed, is;—not that any change whatever took place, or, indeed, possibly could take place, in the Divine nature, either in order to its union with the human, or in consequence of such union; but that, in some way unknown to us, the human nature is so united with the Divine, in the person of Jesus, as to have itself no distinct subsistence apart from that union.

I next adverted to the proper state of the question.—It is not whether Jesus Christ was A MAN; for on this point those who affirm and those who deny his Divinity are agreed; and his real humanity is as essential to the system of the former as to that of the latter:—it is simply, whether "the Man Christ Jesus" be not, at the same time, GOD.

This is a question, I remarked, which cannot be determined in any other way, than by an appeal to the holy Scriptures; these being the only source of information on the subject:—and in making this appeal, it is of immense consequence, that our minds be deeply impressed with the sacredness of the Divine word; and with the guilt and danger of wilfully wresting it from its legitimate sense.

I then proceeded to show, by the simple citation of a considerable number of passages and expressions, what seemed to be the current phraseology of the New Testament, on this important subject. Respecting those various texts, I mentioned, before quoting them, that I could have rehearsed them with the very same confidence, as to the impression they were

fitted to make, to an assembly of Greeks, in the original language, as to you in yours:—and afterwards stated, the great and obvious improbability, that all these passages, together with all others of a similar complexion, that might have been quoted, were either *interpolated*, or *mistranslated*, or *misinterpreted*; and that, through ignorance, or prejudice, or carelessness, no critics, translators, or interpreters, had made this discovery, excepting those who can find in none of them the doctrine which they have so generally been understood to assert.

I took particular notice of the objection, derived from the frequent occurrence, in the New Testament, of language of a different and apparently opposite complexion;—in which Jesus is represented as inferior to the Father,—as sent by him,—receiving a commission from him,—obeying and serving him,—and receiving from him his reward.—On this point I illustrated one general observation, of prime importance in the great question, and in its principle applicable to others of a similar nature:—namely, that while all the art of criticism has been expended, in explaining away those passages which assert his Divinity, and the pains which the attempt has cost sufficiently evince the superlative difficulty of the task;—the only key to the easy and consistent interpretation of these apparently contradictory passages,—the only principle of interpretation which reconciles these seeming contrarieties in the scripture testimony, is the ordinary opinion of the union of two natures in the one person of Christ, and of his having acted, as Mediator, in the voluntarily assumed capacity of the Father's servant:—and that the principle of interpretation, of which this can be truly affirmed, certainly derives from this circumstance a very strong presumptive evidence of its correctness and legitimacy.

In the latter part of the discourse, it was my endeavour to

show, that there are various and important general considerations, in which the dignity of Jesus Christ is very strongly, although indirectly, implied;—and which, on the supposition of his being a mere man, or even a mere creature, however highly elevated, are bereft of all their peculiar beauty, and force, and propriety.—I illustrated this remark in five particulars:—1*st*, The views which are uniformly given in the Scriptures of the unparalleled and inexpressible love of God, in the gift of his only-begotten Son:—2*dly*, The marvellous condescension and grace of Jesus Christ himself; which the strongest possible terms are employed to express:—3*dly*, The depth of interest, the warmth of admiring transport and adoring gratitude, excited in the bosoms of the New Testament writers, by the contemplation, and even by the passing thought, of the love of Christ, or of God in Christ:—4*thly*, The representations given of the height of glory and honour, dominion and power, to which Jesus is exalted, at the right hand of God, as the consequence and reward of the work finished by him when on earth:—and 5*thly*, The singular claims of Jesus on the love and obedience of all his followers.—The language used on all these subjects, I endeavoured to show, is utterly extravagant and unaccountable, on the hypothesis that our blessed Redeemer was no more than a mere human prophet, who was commissioned, like other prophets, to impart to mankind the will of God, and who sealed his testimony by his death.

In the second and third discourses on this subject, proof has been adduced from the Scriptures, that the *Names*, the *Attributes*, the *Works*, and the *Worship*, belonging exclusively to the only true God, are ascribed to Jesus Christ.

Adopting, throughout, the principle of *selection*, I confined myself, on the first of these heads, to the two names, GOD, and JEHOVAH.

I.—1. God.—John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was God*:"—John i. 14. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth:" compared with Isaiah ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called—*the mighty God*:"—Rom. ix. 5. "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, the Christ came, *who is over all, God, blessed for ever*:"—Heb. i. 8. "But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever!"—2 Peter i. 1. "Who have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of *our God and Saviour* Jesus Christ;" a reading justified by the established principles of Greek syntax, and by the precise parallelism of the expression in the 10th verse of the same chapter,—"An entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of *our Lord and Saviour* Jesus Christ:"—Titus ii. 13. to which the same general principles of syntax most clearly and decidedly apply; "Looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of *our great God and Saviour* Jesus Christ."—To these passages, a number of others might have been added.

2. Jehovah.—This is the incommunicable name of the true God, the God of Israel.—He calls it "*My name Jehovah*," Exod. vi. 3. and the Psalmist says, "That men may know, that thou, *whose name alone is Jehovah*, art the Most High over all the earth," Psalm lxxxiii. 18.—It is given to Jesus in the following passages.—Luke i. 16, 17. "And many of the children of Israel shall he (John the Baptist) turn to *the Lord their God*. And he shall go before *him* in the spirit and power of Elias—to make ready a people prepared for *the Lord*:" compared with Isaiah xl. 3. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of *Jehovah*, make straight in

the desert a highway for our God:" a prophecy which is applied to the ministry of John as the forerunner of Jesus, both by himself and by the New Testament historians. John i. 23. Matth. iii. 1—3.—Mal. iii. 1. "Behold, I will send *my* messenger, and he shall prepare the way *before me*: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to *his* temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, *saith Jehovah of hosts.*"—Heb. i. 10. "And, thou, *Lord*, (answering to *Jehovah* throughout the Psalm from which the words are quoted) in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands."—Isaiah vi. 1—5. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also *Jehovah*, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up:—above it stood the Seraphim—and one cried to another, Holy, holy, holy, is *Jehovah of hosts;* the whole earth is full of his glory: mine eyes have seen the King, *Jehovah of hosts:*"—compared with John xii. 41. "These things said Esaias, when he saw *his* (Christ's) glory, and spake of him."—Jer. xxiii. 6. "This is his name, whereby he shall be called, *Jehovah our righteousness.*"—Zech. xii. 10. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon *me* whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."—Isaiah xlv. 23—25. "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, In *Jehovah* have I righteousness and strength:—In *Jehovah* shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory:" compared with Rom. xiv. 10, 11. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of *Christ:* for it is written, As I live, saith

the Lord *(Jehovah)* every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God:" and 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. "Of him are ye, in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness (or justification) and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." I observed, that if conviction was produced by these instances, such conviction would naturally lead to the application of the name to Jesus, in many others, which might not, at first view, appear so obvious.

To these passages was subjoined the remarkable reasoning of the Saviour himself, founded on the peculiar application of the title *Lord* to the Messiah, by David in the beginning of the 110th Psalm: Matth. xxii. 41—46. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How, then, doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto *my Lord*, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David, then, call him *Lord, how is he his Son?* And no man was able to answer him a word."

II. Of *Divine Attributes* ascribed to Jesus, I confined myself to four;—*Eternal Existence, Almighty power, Omnipresence,* and *Omniscience.*

1. *Eternal Existence.*—I here referred, in general terms, but without any particular illustration, to the numerous passages, which intimate his pre-existence, by speaking of him as coming down from heaven, and as ascending up where he was before; of coming forth from the Father, and coming into the world, and of leaving the world and returning to the Father, &c.—and then more particularly to John viii. 58. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Before Abraham was, I am:*" —Heb. i. 10. "Thou, Lord, *in the beginning,* hast laid the

foundations of the earth:"—Col. i. 17. "And he is *before all things:*"—Rev. i. 8, 17, 18. xxii. 13. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty:" "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one:" "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last:" compared with Isaiah xliv. 6. "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer Jehovah of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God."—Micah v. 2. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel:—*whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*"

2. *Almighty Power.*—Isaiah ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called —*the Mighty God:*" where the phrase is the same as in chap. x. 21. "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto *the Mighty God:*"—Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, *the Almighty:*" Phil. iii. 21. "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to *the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*"—For further proof of the ascription of omnipotence to Christ, I referred to his *works*, which were afterwards to be considered.

3. *Omnipresence.*—Matth. xviii. 20. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, *there am I* in the midst of them:" compared with the parallel promise of God to Moses, Exod. xx. 24. "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee:"—John

iii. 13. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who *is in heaven*:"—Matth. xxviii. 20. "And lo, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*"—Omnipresence is implied likewise in

4. *Omniscience;* which has, at the same time, its own distinct evidence.—Rev. ii. 23. "All the churches shall know, that *I (Jesus Christ) am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts;* and I will give unto every one of you according to your works:" compared with 1 Kings viii. 39. "Thou (Jehovah) even *thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men:*" and Jer. xvii. 9, 10. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? *I Jehovah search the hearts, I try the reins,* to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:"—John ii. 24, 25. "But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he *knew all men;* and needed not that any should testify to him of man; for he *knew what was in man:*"—John xxi. 17. "Lord, *thou knowest all things,* thou knowest that I love thee."

III.—Works peculiarly belonging to the true God, are ascribed to Jesus Christ.

Under this head, I first of all directed your attention to the miracles of the Saviour; and endeavoured to show, with regard to some of them, that the *manner* in which they were performed was essentially different from that of any miracles ever wrought by prophets and apostles; and was not susceptible of vindication from the charge of presumptuous impiety, on any other supposition than that he possessed *in himself* the power necessary to their accomplishment.

I then showed, that *creation,* the *creation of all things,* is ascribed to Jesus.—John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

God.—*All things were made by him, and without him was not any one thing made that was made:*"—verse 10th, "He was in the world, and *the world was made by him,* and the world knew him not:"—Col. i. 16, 17. "For *by him were all things created,* that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created *by* him, and *for* him; and he is *before all things;* and *by him all things consist:*" —Heb. i. 10. "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning, *hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands:*"—compared with Isaiah xlviii. 12, 13. "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am the first, I also am the last. *My hand,* also, hath laid the foundations of the earth, and *my right hand* hath spanned the heavens;" and Isaiah xliv. 24. "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer; and he that formed thee from the womb, I am Jehovah, that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone;* that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself.*"

Passing over the subject of the new or spiritual creation, which, however, according to the Scriptures, is as really a peculiar work of God as the former, and which is also, in all its branches, ascribed to Christ:—I proceeded to notice, the *government of the world,* and the *final judgment.*—From a variety of passages, of which the testimony is plain and direct, and which it is unnecessary now to repeat, I showed, that these works *are* assigned to Jesus Christ, as the Mediator between God and men;—and I then obviated the objection, derived from the circumstance of the power of government and judgment being exercised by *delegation*; observing 1*st*, That such delegation does not at all imply *inferiority of nature,* but is in perfect harmony with the general representation given of Christ, in his mediatorial character, as *voluntarily assuming the capacity of a servant,* and, in that capacity,

executing his appointed work, and receiving his promised reward:—and 2*dly*, That if *the fact* be admitted, of Christ's being invested with supreme authority as Lord and Judge of all, there are no qualifications which can fit him for the discharge of those high official acts implied in such authority, short of *omniscience*, *omnipotence*, and *independence*: and that these attributes, if possessed, could not, from their nature, be obtained by transference or communication from another, but must have been original and inherent.

IV.—As to the DIVINE WORSHIP, of which the Scriptures represent the Redeemer as the proper and worthy object:—I did not insist on those acts of obeisance that are recorded as having been done to him when on earth; because it is difficult, as to the greater number at least of these, to ascertain with certainty the kind and degree of homage that was intended to be paid. I only remarked, in general, that in some cases it bore so very near a resemblance to Divine worship, that a creature, feelingly alive to a sense of his inferiority, and jealous of the honour of the God that sent him, might surely have been expected to caution those who paid it, against undue reverence and the approach at least to impiety which it involved, as others are recorded to have done in similar circumstances.

I applied this observation particularly to the words of Thomas, after his Master's resurrection, when, upon his incredulity being overcome by the testimony of his senses, "he said unto him, *My Lord, and my God!*"—and I endeavoured to prove, that these words cannot be fairly interpreted otherwise, than as an address to Christ, and a confession of the faith of him who uttered them.

The following texts were then quoted and illustrated, in proof of this particular.—Rom. x. 11—13. "For the scrip-

ture saith, *Whosoever believeth on him* shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall *call upon the name of the Lord* shall be saved. How, then, shall they *call on him in whom they have not believed?*"—Acts ix. 14. "And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that *call on thy name:*"—Acts ix. 21. "All that heard him were astonished, saying, Is not this he who destroyed *them that called on this name* in Jerusalem?"—Acts xxii. 16. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of the Lord:*"—1 Cor. i. 2. "To the church of God which is at Corinth,—with all that, in every place, *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,* both theirs and ours."—1 Thess. iii. 10—13. "Now God himself, even our Father, *and our Lord Jesus Christ,* direct our way unto you. And *the Lord* make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all, even as we do toward you: to the end *he* may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints:"—2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. "Now *our Lord Jesus Christ himself,* and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace; comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work:"—2 Cor. xiii. 8—10. "For this thing I besought *the Lord* thrice, that it might depart from me. And *he* said unto me, *my* grace is sufficient for thee; for *my* strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the *power of Christ* may rest upon me:"—Eph. vi. 23. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God our Father, *and from the Lord Jesus Christ:*"—2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,* and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be

with you all. Amen:"—2 John 3. "Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God the Father, and *from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father*, in truth and love:"—Acts vii. 59, 60. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon (Jesus) and saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!* And he *kneeled down*, and cried with a loud voice, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!* And when he had said this, he fell asleep:"—Rev. v. 11—13. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is *the Lamb that was slain*, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, even all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, *and unto the Lamb*, for ever and ever! Amen!"—Heb. i. 6. "When he bringeth again the first-begotten into the world, he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him:*" of which commanded worship the preceding scene exhibits a most sublime and impressive exemplification.

Surely, if Jesus Christ be not God, the language of the New Testament has been framed to deceive. The writers must have intended to exalt their Master at the expense of truth.—If not—if they meant that their readers should form no higher idea of Jesus Christ, than as a mere human prophet, commissioned to teach, as other prophets had done before him, the will of God to men; they certainly have, on this supposition, been most unfortunate in their use of words. Laying inspiration entirely out of the question, how can we suppose, that upright men, with honest intentions, should have

so expressed themselves, on a subject of this nature, as actually to mislead ninety-nine in the hundred of all who have ever professed to believe their writings?—The case, it ought to be particularly observed, was one of no difficulty. The writers were not handling a point of metaphysical nicety; which required, for the prevention of mistakes, peculiar caution in the choice of their expressions. If Jesus was no more than a human prophet, we can conceive nothing more easy, than for those who "wrote of him" to avoid all such phraseology as could possibly convey to the minds of their readers any impression inconsistent with this simple view of his person and office. But is this the case? I confidently leave with yourselves the answer to this question. For my own part, I can discern only one alternative:—Either this book was not given by inspiration of God, nor even written by men of common understanding and common honesty;—or the men who wrote it were taught of God to believe, and commissioned to reveal to others, as one of the leading truths in their system of doctrine, that Jesus Christ, although born of the seed of David according to the flesh, was, at the same time, "over all, God, blessed for ever."

We are accustomed to speak of the artless simplicity of the New Testament historians,—of their entire freedom from every symptom of passion, partiality, or exaggeration, as a strong indication of their veracity; a convincing evidence of the truth and honesty of their narrative. But if the fact be, that they have written respecting their Master in such terms, as to convey to the minds of an immense proportion of their readers, not merely the impression of his having been *a greater man* than he really was,—possessed of higher powers, and of a purer and more exalted character, than truly belonged to him—(a fault so common with biographers);—but absolutely an impression of his having been *more than man*, of his having

been the "Son of God," in a sense that implied his *equality with the Father*:—nay, if they have even left it a matter of uncertainty with their readers, whether the subject of their histories, (whom, on the supposition, they must have viewed as a mere man like themselves,) ought to be simply revered as a human prophet, or adored as "God over all:"—I know not how this fact can be easily made to accord with the validity of the argument.—On the contrary, supposing the Divine dignity of his person, nothing can be more wonderful than the manner in which they write. In the simplicity of the statement of facts, and in the total absence of all reflections of their own, and of all attempts to work upon the passions of their readers, it is so essentially different from what, in such circumstances, we should naturally have expected from the operation of the ordinary principles and feelings of the human mind, that it becomes an evidence of more than their *credibility*;—it becomes a proof of their *inspiration*,—of their having written under the direction and restraint of superior influence.

I fully admit, that, as the doctrine of which I have been treating is an article of faith of high importance, we should reasonably expect to find it revealed in plain and explicit terms. And I contend, that the fact corresponds to the expectation,—that it *is* so revealed;—in terms as plain and explicit as are employed to express any other truth whatever contained in the Bible.

I alluded, in a former discourse, to a mode of reasoning sometimes resorted to by the adversaries of this doctrine.—They count the number of passages which are usually adduced in support of it; and are fond of calculating, and pointing out, the small proportion which these passages bear to the contents of the different books in which they occur, and to the body of revelation in general.—But, in truth, there can be no mode of reasoning more sophistical than this. We

might, with equal propriety, dictate to the supreme God the particular *manner* in which he should communicate to his creatures the knowledge of his mind, as presume to fix the number of times that any doctrine must be repeated, in order to entitle it to their reception and belief.—It has often been remarked, with regard to the Scriptures, and it has, at the same time, been shown to be, on various accounts, one of their peculiar excellences, that they are not written in a *systematical form*. To say, therefore, as is frequently said, respecting any of the texts which have been quoted, or respecting any others, that they state the doctrine in question, not directly and formally, but indirectly and incidentally, is to say nothing at all to the purpose; nothing that can, in the mind of any reasonable man, in the least degree invalidate their force:—for it amounts to no more, than that the manner in which *this particular truth* is revealed, corresponds with the general plan or method of Divine revelation in the Bible.

It is, I am aware, a common mode of speech on such subjects, that "*the Bible is full* of the doctrine;" that it appears conspicuous in *every page* of the word of God."—But is any one ever misled by such expressions? Does any one ever imagine them to mean any thing more, than that the particular doctrine, respecting which they are used, is *in many places clearly revealed*, and that *throughout* it is *implied* and *understood*?—The most effectual way to illustrate this, will be to apply the observation to what our opponents themselves profess to consider as the essence of Christianity.—According to them, the grand distinction of the gospel is, its ascertaining the certainty of a resurrection from the dead, a judgment to come, and a future state of rewards and punishments. To these topics they are accustomed to apply the very language of which I now speak. For example:—"The apostolic summary of the Christian faith is, 'that God will judge the

world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." This doctrine *beams forth, with unclouded splendour, from every page of the New Testament*, whatever becomes of the correctness and accuracy of the received text."*—I find no fault with this language, nor with the particular application of it. I only remark, that it is language quite as fairly applicable to the doctrine under our consideration: and that, upon the principle of judging doctrines, according to the number of passages in which they are stated, (stated, I mean, not incidentally and casually, but as the direct and formal object of the writer) even *this* "summary of the Christian faith" would hardly, I fear, itself abide the application of this novel and singular test of truth.

The sole question, on all subjects of this nature, with which we have to do,—let it be constantly impressed on our remembrance, and uniformly recognized in our practice,—is simply this;—not "In what manner, or with what degree of frequency, is this, or any other doctrine revealed?"—but, "*Is it revealed?* Is it, according to the ordinary meaning of words, clearly made known in this book?"—That the Divinity of Jesus Christ is plainly and unequivocally taught in *our received translation*, at least, of the New Testament, cannot admit of a moment's question:—and of the faithfulness of this translation, in the various passages referred to, I must, after the observations which have been made upon them, leave every one to form his own judgment.

But the RECEIVED TEXT, we are often reminded, from which our English translation of the New Testament was made, is far from being perfect. It is of considerable antiquity; and hundreds of additional manuscripts have been discovered and

* Introduction to Improved Version of the New Testament, p 28.

collated, since it was completed.—I wish to avoid here any show of such biblical learning, as I am conscious to myself I do not possess. Happily, indeed, there does not exist the slightest occasion for extensive critical discussion. A single observation will be perfectly sufficient to enable you to appreciate the value of the improvements upon the received text, *with regard to the particular subject in hand*:—for with their *general* importance as to other subjects we have at present no concern.—Of all the texts, then, in the New Testament, to which I have directed your attention on this interesting topic, how many are there, do you suppose, which undergo any alteration in the text of GRIESBACH, the most recent, and, on all hands, acknowledged the most perfect?—You will be surprised, perhaps,—especially any of you who may have been in the way of hearing Griesbach so often and so triumphantly appealed to, as he usually is by our opponents,—when I assure you that there is ONLY ONE:—that not a single text but one of all that have been quoted is in the slightest degree touched by this high and vaunted authority!—and the change made in that one, by the introduction of the word *God*, I formerly showed, either left the argument exactly as it was, or gave it additional strength in favour of our Lord's divinity.*

The fact as to this matter stands as follows.—There are *three texts* connected with the present subject which this eminent critic sets aside: namely, 1 John v. 7. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one:"—Acts xx. 28. "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood:"—and 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh."—The first of

* The passage is Rev. i. 8. See pp. 129—132.

these texts is rejected as entirely an interpolation. In the second, the reading "the church of *the Lord*" is preferred, on a preponderance of authorities, to the reading of the received text, "the church of God."* In the third, "God was manifest in the flesh" gives place to "*He who* was manifested in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit," &c.† Now to no one of these three passages have I referred, in proof of the doctrine which it has been my object to establish; nor is it now my intention to enter into any discussion of the merits of the controversy, respecting the spuriousness of the first, or the various readings of the second and third. I feel not the smallest necessity for pressing even these texts, however important they may seem, into the service. The cause does not require it. An anxious defence of disputed passages has the appearance of an acknowledgment, that the doctrine which they are brought to support cannot be successfully maintained without them. Even if the passages in question had been less doubtful than they are, I should have been disposed to decline insisting upon them, for the

* Κυριου for Θεου. While the Editors of the Improved Version adopt this reading, and are supported in it by the authority of Griesbach, and by the concurrence also of some Trinitarian critics; (see Ecl. Rev. vol. V. p. 246.) the reading of the received text is not universally given up even by Socinian Expositors. "Mr. Wakefield contends strenuously for Θεου, and afterwards "effects his escape from the consequence, by proposing two of the most extra- "ordinary criticisms that were ever ventured by a Greek scholar. Τον ιδιον "αιματος, he renders, not *his own blood*, but *his own son*, because truly a man's "*son* may be said to be *his own blood*; and therefore, the *Son* of *God* may be "expressed by GOD'S OWN BLOOD,—an expression, which, if it had been used "of GOD THE FATHER by a *Trinitarian* in defence of *his* doctrine, would have "subjected him to Mr. Wakefield's ineffable contempt. Mr. W. supplies also "another way of getting rid of the difficulty (that is, the difficulty of acknow- "ledging the Divinity of our Lord) viz. that of translating the words—"by "the blood of his own," (supplying the word *Son*.)—This, observe, is the "rendering of δια του ιδιου αιματος."—Magee's Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice: Appendix, vol. II. p. 462. Note.

† See Note E. properly H.

express purpose of making it apparent, that the cause is independent of their aid; and that so far as respects the foundation on which my belief in the Divinity of my Saviour rests, I could, without hesitation, relinquish them all, and still retain my conviction unshaken and unimpaired. It is not on the genuineness or accuracy of one or two insulated texts, that this important article of faith depends. If language have any consistent and intelligible meaning; if the writers of the sacred books at all understood what they wrote; —the Divinity of Jesus Christ, in inseparable connexion with his atonement, forms a fundamental article in that system of truth, which they were inspired to communicate to mankind. It is an integral part of an harmonious and magnificent whole. And now that we have seen the full amount of those alterations on the Received Text which have any relation to this subject, I think we may adopt, with emphasis, the language quoted a little ago:—"This doctrine beams forth, "with unclouded splendour, from every page of the New "Testament, *whatever becomes of the correctness and accuracy* "*of the Received Text.*"—It is impossible that any translation, deserving the name of translation, can be made, which does not plainly testify the doctrine in question. Even in the Improved Version itself, it "*beams forth,*" in spite of every attempt to quench or to cover its light.—From the *translation* it has been found impossible to exclude it: and the object of those notes, which are, with a few exceptions, appended to all the passages relating to the subject, is, to explain away what the translation cannot conceal;—not to show, like other commentaries, what the meaning *is*, but what it *is not.* And specimens of criticism more purely arbitrary and licentious, I may safely venture to say, are nowhere else to be found, except in those writings from which, in general, they are selected.

I shall now close the discussion of this subject, by impressing a little further on your attention, as a grand practical deduction from what has been said, a text to which I briefly alluded in a former discourse:—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich."*—From the proofs and illustrations which have been laid before you, of the Divine dignity of our blessed Redeemer, these words will be understood in all their greatness of meaning, and felt in all their force of tender and impressive appeal.

I formerly stated the interpretation put upon these words by the adversaries of the Divinity and pre-existence of Christ. They affirm, that the word rendered "he *became poor*" does not mean a *transition* from a previous state of riches to a subsequent state of poverty, but describes the two states as contemporaneous;—that "although rich, he lived in poverty:" —and the sense affixed by them to the words, when thus translated, is, that he was rich in miraculous powers, which it was at his option to employ for his own advantage, yet denied himself, and chose, for the good of others, to live a life of poverty and dependance.

On this view of the passage, permit me to offer a few additional observations.

1*st.* It is at once admitted, that the word signifies to *be* poor, as well as to *become* poor:—but that the former of these is its only or exclusive signification, is far from being true.†

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

† The following note on this text, is taken from the Eclectic Review of the Improved Version of the New Testament; a Review distinguished for its ability, and in which there certainly is no ground given for any complaint of deficiency of candour.—"2 Cor. viii. 9. ἐπτώχευσε, 'he lived in poverty.' In the note we "are told, that 'the word properly signifies an actual state, not a change of state.' "This observation is not correct. Πτωχεία, and its cognates, certainly denote an

No argument is founded on the mere etymological import of the verb, as if, in itself, it necessarily expressed the idea of transition from riches to poverty;—it is enough, that it will, with equal fairness, bear this meaning; and that other considerations, of sense and connexion, determine it to be the acceptation in which it is here used.

2dly. Supposing the criticism were correct, and the translation, "although rich, he lived in poverty," were adopted, this would not, by any means, ascertain the justness of their interpretation, or necessarily exclude the idea of our Lord's Divinity: for the words, it is obvious, might still mean, that, as he possessed, during his life upon earth, the Divine nature in union with the human, and consequently continued, as God, the creator and proprietor of the universe, although *thus* rich, he condescended to live in poverty.

3dly. The interpretation of our opponents is liable, as I stated in a former discourse, to a decisive objection, from its supposing a mere human prophet possessing miraculous powers *at his own disposal.* This supposition, I endeavoured to show, is utterly inadmissible; as being completely subversive of our confidence in the evidence of miracles. The power by which these were wrought did not, and could not, in whole or in part, reside in the creature;—in the "holy men of God"

"actual state, and assert nothing necessarily on the cause or occasion of that "state. But from a curious passage in Aristophanes (Plutus, 546—553.) and "the remarks of the scholiast, it appears almost certain, that these words were, "very often at least, understood by the Attics as implying a fall from better "circumstances: for πτωχεία is applied to Dionysius, the exiled Tyrant of Syra-"cuse.—Plutarch (Wyttenb. t. I. 939.) has μᾶλλον πτωχώσεις, 'You will become "more sordidly poor.' Suidas says. Πτωχεύειν—ὁ ἐκπεπτωκὼς τοῦ ἔχειν than which "nothing *could* be more express. The Attic, next to the common Greek, "furnishes our best guide for the ἅπαξ λεγόμενα of the New Testament, when the "LXX are silent: but in this case their testimony is abundant. Πτωχεύω occurs "six times in the Old Testament and Apocrypha; and *always* in the sense of "transition from comfort or opulence to poverty."—Eclectic Review, vol. V. p. 340.

who were commissioned to impart to the world the knowledge of the Divine will. *They*, in truth, did nothing—and could do nothing. "The Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the word by signs following:"* and the miracle, or rather the evidence of the truth arising from the miracle, consisted in the immediate and visible concurrence of the Divine will, with the expressed will of the prophet, at whose command the effect took place.† In this, indeed, lies the very nature of a miracle, as a *Divine attestation* to the truth of the prophet's pretensions, or of the particular testimony which he delivered:—"God *bare them witness*, by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."‡

4thly. According to the interpretation of our opponents, the language of Paul, in the passage before us, was not at all

* Mark xvi. 20. *The Lord*, by whose power the miracles of the apostles are here represented as having been effected, is evidently *the Lord Jesus*, the exalted Redeemer. This is clear, from the connexion of the verse quoted with that which precedes:—"So then, after *the Lord* had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, *the Lord* working with them, and confirming the word by signs following."

† Dr. Priestley states this sentiment most explicitly in the following short extract. Writing against the Arian notion of the creation of the world by the instrumentality of the Logos, he says:—"Some may possibly say, 'It is not "necessary, that Christ should of himself have wisdom and power sufficient for "the work of creation; but that nevertheless God might work by him in that "business, *as he did in his miracles* on earth; Christ speaking the word, or using "some indifferent action, (such as anointing the eyes of the blind man) and *God* "*producing the effect.*'—The two cases, however, are essentially different. That "Christ or any other prophet should be able to *foretel what God would do*, "*(which in fact is all that they pretended to)* was necessary as a proof of their "Divine mission, whenever there was a propriety in God's having intercourse "with men by means of a man like themselves," &c.—While Dr. Priestley thus correctly describes the true nature of miraculous power, as being simply the ability to foretel the immediate interposition of Divine agency at any particular juncture, he, at the same time, very consistently with his view of the person of Christ, places *him*, as to the nature of the power with which he was invested, on the same level with other prophets.

‡ Heb. ii. 4.

peculiarly applicable to Jesus; but was equally true of Paul himself, and of his fellow-apostles. They too possessed miraculous powers, and that in a very eminent degree. To allege that the absolute command of such powers was intrusted to Jesus, and not to them, is a mere gratuitous assumption; and an assumption, which, on the supposition that Jesus was a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary, possessing the same nature with the apostles themselves, and that nature only, is destitute of any reasonable foundation.—I argue only on supposition. The transference of miraculous power, so as that it should reside in the creature, is, as I have already noticed, a thing in its own nature impossible. But suppose for a moment it *were* possible; if one mere man, "fallible and peccable," could have this power committed to him, at his absolute disposal, it is difficult to conceive why others, who are denominated "holy men of God," should not have had it in the same way.—The apostles, then, were *rich in miraculous powers*, and yet *they* too *lived a life of poverty*. And Paul might have adduced his own example, in the same terms, and with the same force: "Ye know *my* gracious goodness, that though I am rich, I live in poverty, that ye through my poverty may be rich."—Would this apostle, think you, have relished such a translation and exposition of his words, as would have placed himself and his Master on a level?

5*thly*. There is an obvious and pointed *antithesis* in the verse, which ought not to be overlooked, and which concurs with other considerations, to decide its true meaning.—The expression in the end of the verse, "that ye through his poverty might be made rich," which declares the gracious design of the Saviour's condescension, with regard to sinners, implies, beyond all question, a transition from poverty to riches:—"that ye, through his poverty, *might be enriched*."—If so, let not the sentence be robbed of one of its chief beauties.

A transition is expressed, on the part of Jesus, a voluntary transition, from a state of infinite glory and riches, to a state of debasement and poverty; in order to a transition, on the part of his people, from a state of wretched degradation and poverty, to the possession of true honour, and of excellent and durable riches.

Ye know, then, my Christian brethren, this marvellous grace. And what effect ought the contemplation of it to produce on your dispositions and conduct?—I answer, in the words of the apostle, "Let *this* mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."*—Imitate the noble spirit of *benevolence*, displayed in this wonderful example. Study to promote the benefit—the temporal, but above all the spiritual and eternal benefit of your fellow-men; and be ready, with all cheerfulness and promptitude, to make every sacrifice for the accomplishment of this most valuable end. It was to quicken the spirit, and to rouse to the practice, of disinterested and enlarged beneficence, that the apostle introduced the example of the Redeemer's grace. And surely every true disciple of the Redeemer, as an undeserving partaker of this grace, must feel his heart touched by the appeal;—touched in all its finest and noblest affections; thrilled with holy delight; animated by fervent gratitude; glowing with emotions of kindred generosity; "ready to every good work;" and prepared, with resolute self-denial, to "suffer the loss of all things."

If you believe the doctrine which I have been endeavouring to establish, "your hearts will burn within you" with *love to the Divine Saviour:* and, while the glow of grateful attachment combines with admiration of all the excellences of his pure and spotless character,—the feeling will constrain you to cheerful, unreserved, and universal *obedience to his will;*—"to

* Phil. ii. 5

live, not unto yourselves, but to him who died for you, and rose again."—It will excite you also to fervent prayers, liberal contributions, and active and persevering exertions, for the advancement of his glory in the world.—Influenced by concern for this object, and for the salvation of sinners, with which it is inseparably connected; and convinced, that error is subversive of both, dishonouring to the Saviour, and destructive to mankind; you will feel the duty of "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints;" of maintaining its purity, and promoting its diffusion.

Of this faith I do consider the doctrine in question as an essential and fundamental article. To *my* eyes, if you remove this truth, the Sun of righteousness is covered with "dire eclipse," and the bright prospects of futurity overspread with "the blackness of darkness."—Take away this truth, and the doctrine of atonement connected with it, and you replace at the gate of paradise, the dread sentinel stationed there at the fall, with his flaming sword, that turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life:—nay, you root out the tree of life itself from the midst of the paradise of God.

Believing the doctrine to be thus important, to comprehend within itself all the hopes of a guilty and perishing world,—while I would contend *meekly*, I must be pardoned if, at the same time, I contend *earnestly*. It is not a subject for that speculative, cold-hearted indifference, which is falsely esteemed by some essential to freedom from prejudice.—Men may speak lightly of sentiment, and of faith. The Bible certainly does not. Salvation, in both of its great branches,—salvation from the *guilt* of sin, and salvation from its *power*,—is in it continually represented, as connected inseparably with the faith of the gospel. The truth as it is in Jesus, while it is, to him who believes it, the ground of his justification, and the firm foundation of his hope, is, at the same time, the means

of subduing the enmity of his heart against God, and the great principle of his progressive sanctification. He "lives by the faith of the Son of God." This faith "purifies his heart," and "works by love." It produces in the soul the principles of obedience; and the practice follows in the life. Like the prophet's cruse of salt, by healing the fountain it rectifies the streams.

"May God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in your hearts, giving you the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ:"—to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen!*

* For additional proofs from the scriptures of the great article of our blessed Lord's Divinity, and further answers to objections,—see Note P.

DISCOURSE VII.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

ROM. iii. 25, 26.

"*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;—to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.*"

"THE value of the gospel," says an eminent Unitarian writer,* "depends not at all upon any idea we may have "concerning the *person of Christ:* all that we ought to regard "is the *object of his mission*, and the *authority* with which his "doctrine was promulgated. The doctrine of immortality, "which is the great object of the whole revealed will of God, "is just as acceptable to me from the mouth of the son of "Joseph and Mary, as from the mouth of any man created "for the purpose, from the mouth of an Angel, or from the "voice of God himself speaking from heaven."

How different from those of this writer, were the thoughts and feelings of the inspired author of the epistle to the Hebrews!—"God," says he, "who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his own Son. And having, in the remainder of the first chapter, as we have formerly seen, illustrated the glory of the person of Christ, as

* Dr. Priestley.

the Superior of prophets and of angels, the Equal of God the Father, the everlasting and almighty Creator and Lord of all things;—he deduces, from the view thus given, an inference, founded on the obvious principle, that the importance of the message, and the danger of rejecting it, must bear some proportion to the dignity of the messenger by whom it is sent:—"THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For, if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward:—how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will!"*—If Jesus was not superior to prophets and angels, there is no force in this conclusion; and, on the other hand, the higher his superiority, the more impressive is the inference, and the more imperative the duty.

If, indeed, the *sole object* of the mission of Christ, was, to assure men of "the *doctrine of immortality*;"—If, as the same writer elsewhere alleges, "his business, like that of any other "prophet, was nothing more than to deliver a message from "God, and to confirm it by miracles;" we should, in that case, on the supposition of the Divinity of Christ, find it difficult to vindicate the wisdom of God from the charge of exciting useless astonishment, by using a method so extraordinary, for the accomplishment of an end, which might surely have been effected by simpler means.—On this principle, we should have been constrained to admit, if not

* Heb. ii. 1—4.

entirely, at least in a very great degree, the alleged *inutility* of the doctrine, which it has been my object, in several former discourses, to establish.

But we distinctly and entirely deny the justice of the representation, which is thus given, of the purpose of Christ's mission.—That he was "a teacher sent from God," we cordially admit. That "life and incorruption were brought to light," to clear and unclouded light, "by his gospel," we rejoice to know, and to acknowledge. But that the sole, or even the principal design of his coming was, to confirm the certainty of a future state, and assure mankind of a judgment to come, we cannot, by any means, allow.—We assert, that he came in the character not only of a prophet, but of a priest; not to instruct merely, but to redeem; not only to set an example of obedience, but to atone for transgression,—"to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself:"—that when life and incorruption are said to have been brought to light by the gospel, the meaning is, not merely that the doctrine of a future state was certified to men; but that by his "finishing the work given him to do," the ground of hope was laid, and the way to the enjoyment of eternal happiness in that state clearly and fully made known.

When we consider, that the period denominated "the fulness of the time,"—the period of the expected Messiah's advent,—holds so prominent a place in the Old Testament Scriptures; appearing there as the point to which all preceding time looked forward;—that what was then to be accomplished was brought before the eye of hope by so vast a variety of typical institutions;—that it constituted "the spirit of prophecy;" being the theme of its sublimest and most rapturous anticipations, the burden of its sweetest songs, the chief of its great and precious promises;—that those "holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," exhausted

on this subject the language of astonishment, and of delight:—when we consider all this, we should have good reason, surely, to be surprised, if, after all, the sum of what was to be accomplished at that remarkable epoch, was nothing more than the confirmation of a truth already known.

While we readily admit, therefore, that the *object of the mission of Christ* is what ought supremely to engage our attention, we conceive that, even from previous and preparatory circumstances, there was strong ground to conclude, that this object was to be something more than what has now been stated;—we are convinced that it actually *was* something more;—and that the purpose of his appearing was so far from having no connexion with the doctrine of his Divinity, that his Divinity was essential to its accomplishment.

Further; if the fact be indeed, as I have been endeavouring to prove, that God was manifested in the flesh; the greatness and singularity of the fact may well convince us of the magnitude of the design. An event so prodigious as the appearance of God in our nature, could not take place, either for no purpose, or for a purpose of trifling moment. The God of infinite wisdom does nothing in vain. Every effort of his power has an end in view; an end always worthy of himself in its nature, and, in its importance, proportionate to the means employed for its accomplishment.—The two great general purposes which are constantly regarded by him, in all his works, and in all his ways, are, the manifestation of his own glory, and, in connexion with it, the happiness of his sensitive, and especially of his intelligent creatures. Both of these purposes we consider as having been eminently answered, by the incarnation, sufferings, and death, of the Son of God, when viewed in that light in which we believe the word of God to represent them,—as an ATONEMENT FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD.

In the preceding part of this epistle, the apostle had proved, by an appeal to *facts*, the universal depravity of Gentiles and of Jews. At the tenth verse of this chapter, he proceeds to show, that the conclusion, to which facts had conducted him, accorded with the declarations of those Scriptures, of which the Jews acknowledged the Divine authority.—Having established the sinfulness, he declares the guilt and condemnation of all mankind;—he shows the impossibility of any creature's obtaining justification by a law which he has violated, and which, in the plainest and most unqualified terms, pronounces against all transgressors the sentence of death:—on the hopelessness of this wretched state, he founds the necessity of *free forgiveness*;—and he then points out the leading object of the mediation of Christ; which was, to render the exercise of God's mercy, in bestowing such forgiveness, consistent, in the eyes of his intelligent creation, with the claims of his dishonoured authority, the demands of his justice, the glory of his holiness, the rectitude of his moral administration, and the general good of the universe.

"Whom" (*i. e.* Christ Jesus, verse 24.)—"Whom God hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God;—to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

From these verses, I propose to illustrate, and prove, the five following observations:—

I. It is in consideration of the Sacrifice of Christ, that God is propitious to sinners:

II. In pardoning the guilty on this ground, God displays his righteousness:

III. The ground on which the pardon of sin is bestowed, has been, in every age, and under every dispensation, the same:

IV. An interest in the pardoning mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, is obtained by faith:

V. In resting our hope of forgiveness on the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, we build on a sure foundation.

To say all that might be said, in a field so extensive as this, is more than could well be done in several discourses.—It is my intention, to confine myself to the more prominent views of my subject: and, as I am persuaded that the principal objections brought against the doctrine of atonement arise from mistaken apprehensions of its nature, I shall endeavour, as much as I can, to avoid controversial discussion, and, with as great brevity and simplicity as the nature of the subject will permit, to state what appears to be the testimony of God.

I. Let me now, then, proceed to the illustration of the *first* proposition in the series:—IT IS IN CONSIDERATION OF THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST THAT GOD IS PROPITIOUS TO SINNERS.

There are, amongst critics, different opinions with regard to the proper import, in this connexion, of the original word translated, *propitiation.** Several, of high eminence, give it as their judgment that, in its present occurrence, it ought to be translated *propitiatory sacrifice;* † while others prefer rendering it *propitiatory,* or *mercy-seat.*—To the latter of these two opinions I am inclined to give the preference.—The same word occurs in only one other place in the New Testament;—in an epistle, generally believed to have been written by the same author:—Heb. ix. 5. "And over it (viz. the ark of the covenant) the cherubim of glory, shadowing *the*

* Ἱλαστηριον.

† Michaelis. Introd. to New Test. p. 179, and pp. 187, 188.—Kypke, as referred to by Michaelis in both these passages.—See also, however, Dr. Marsh's notes on the latter passage in the same volume, pp. 449—452.—Dr. Magee, too, prefers the translation of *propitiatory Sacrifice*, vol. i. p. 221.

mercy-seat:"—in which occurrence of it, there can be no doubt about its signification.—It is the word also, which is invariably used by the Greek translators of the Old Testament, for that part of the sacred furniture of the Tabernacle.—The word translated, in other passages, *propitiation*, although of kindred origin, is different.*—On these grounds, I think the word used in the text should be translated *propitiatory*, or *mercy-seat.* We shall see immediately, however, that with regard to real effect on the subject now before us, there is no very material difference, (if, indeed, there be any difference at all,) between the one translation and the other.

According to the meaning thus assigned to the word, we have, in the text, an allusion to the mercy-seat under the law, as a type of Jesus Christ, and of the effects, as will appear, of his atoning sacrifice.—To the institution of the mercy-seat we must, therefore, look, that we may rightly understand the allusion. It is to be found in Exod. xxv. 17—22. "And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end; even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between

* Ιλασμος. Compare, in the Greek, 1 John ii. 2. iv. 10.

the two cherubim that are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things that I will give thee in commandment to the children of Israel."

It is from this description that Jehovah receives the appellation of—the God that *dwelleth between the cherubim*;* an appellation which may, consequently, be interpreted, as of equivalent import with the New Testament characters—"*the God of peace*"—"*the God of all grace.*"—The position of the propitiatory, upon the ark of the testimony, might be intended to indicate the consistency of his appearing in this benign character, for the purpose of communing with his guilty creatures, with the claims and sanctions of his righteous law. So that when Jehovah, the God of Israel, "shone forth" from between the cherubim, "mercy and truth" might be said to "meet together, righteousness and peace to embrace each other."

Surely this cannot fail to remind you of Him, who "received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED!" It is *in him*, as the subject either of promise, of prophecy, of typical institution, or of direct testimony, that God has, all along from the beginning, made himself known to men, as "*the God of peace.*" It is in him that he "reconciles the guilty to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."†

Had nothing further been said respecting the mercy-seat, we might have been led to conclude, that Jehovah appeared there in the exercise of *mere* mercy; I mean of mercy, unconnected with any kind of *satisfaction for sin*.—With the description of the propitiatory itself, we must, however, connect the account which is elsewhere given of the manner

* 2 Kings xix. 15. Psalm lxxx. 1.

† 2 Pet. i. 17. Matth. xvii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 19.

in which it was to be approached by the worshipper; the high priest being expressly enjoined to draw near to Him who dwelt between the cherubim, both in his own behalf, and in behalf of the people, according to certain prescribed rites.—A particular account of these is contained in the sixteenth chapter of the book of Leviticus, of which a few verses will show you their general nature, sufficiently for our present purpose. Verses 2, 3, 11—15. "And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place, within the vail, before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat. Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering.—And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat."

This *goat of the sin-offering*, as we learn from the intermediate verses, was one of two, which Aaron was to take from the congregation of Israel:—and after *it* had been thus offered

in sacrifice, and its blood brought within the vail, the remaining goat, with all the iniquities of the children of Israel laid upon its head, by the solemn vicarious confession of the high priest, was to be sent off alive into the wilderness, bearing away, emblematically, as a devoted victim, this load of *atoned* and *acknowledged* guilt.—The figure was necessarily *double:* the slain goat typifying the atonement of Christ, and the scape-goat representing its efficacy.

But the circumstance which I wish, at present, to impress particularly on your attention, is, that the mercy-seat was to be approached *with blood;*—with the blood of *atonement;* for such, in various parts of the chapter, it is expressly declared to have been.*—This blood was to be brought within the vail, and to be sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat:—and while the sacrificial blood was thus presented, the burning incense was, by the cloud of ascending smoke, to diffuse its grateful fragrance, in emblematic testimony of the Divine satisfaction:—and this satisfaction is, accordingly, elsewhere expressed, in connexion with the sacrifice of Christ, and with the offerings by which it was typified, by Jehovah's *smelling a sweet savour.*†

The mercy-seat, then, in order to Jehovah's appearing there as the God of grace, consistently with the glory of his name, must, it appears, be stained with the "blood of sprinkling,"—the "blood that maketh atonement for the soul."—The reason why the blood was specifically appointed for this purpose is emphatically assigned in the subsequent chapter of the book of Leviticus—"For *the life of the flesh is in the blood;* and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for

* See verses 6, 30, 34, &c.

† Compare Gen. viii. 21. with Eph. v. 3. Rev. viii. 3, 4. Psal. cxlii. 2.

the soul."* The blood, then, was the atonement for the soul, because it was the *life* of the victim:—and because it was the appointed atonement for the soul, it was to be held sacred, on pain of death.

It is true, that, in the chapter of Leviticus first referred to, atonement is said to be made for places, and for instruments of service, as well as for persons:—"And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.—And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and shall make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and shall put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel."†—On this subject, it has been justly remarked, that the atonement prescribed by the Levitical law "produced, in all cases, the effect of *fitting for the Divine* "*service*. This, in such as involved no consideration of "moral character (as in the consecration of inanimate things, "or the atonement for persons labouring under ceremonial "impurities) could consist only in the removal of the external "impurity; for in such cases, this impediment alone existed: "—whilst in those in which moral character *was* concerned, "(as in cases of sin, whereby man, having incurred the "displeasure of God, had disqualified himself for the offices of "his worship,) the unfitness could have been removed only by "such means as, at the same time, removed that displeasure, "and restored the offender to the Divine favour: or, in other

* Chapter xvii. 11. † Lev. xvi. 16, 18, 19.

"words, the atonement was, in such cases, an act of *propi-*
"*tiation.*"*

This distinction seems to be reasonable and obvious.—I would further observe, however, as a good deal of stress is laid, by the adversaries of the atonement, on the circumstance I am now considering, that, in the verses last read, there is a marked connexion between the atonement for the holy place and for the instruments of Divine service, and the pollution and guilt of the children of Israel. It is from *their* guilt and pollution that the necessity for such atonement is represented as arising:—so that the atonement for the holy place, the tabernacle, and the altar, is still, in some sense, an atonement for the sins of the people, which are considered as cleaving to, and polluting, and unfitting for the service of God, the places and the instruments of their worship. Of this the verses last quoted are, of themselves, a sufficient evidence.—The apostle Paul, in a similar manner, connects the two ideas of "purifying with blood the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry," and of the atonement made, by the same means, "for the errors of the people."†

The law, then, I must now observe (and with the observation I shall conclude the illustration of the type)—the law, by which it was enjoined, on pain of death, that the mercy-seat should not be approached otherwise than *with blood*, strikingly represented the necessity of the shedding of the blood of Christ, in order to his being the *true propitiatory*; that is, in order to God's being "IN HIM WELL PLEASED," and thus accessible to sinners, as suppliants for mercy. And, agreeably to this, it may be noticed, that the declaration of God's satisfaction in his beloved Son, which came from "the excellent glory" on "the holy mount," was connected with the subject

* Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol. i. p. 330.

† See Heb. ix. 19—22.

of conference between Jesus and his heavenly visitants,—"*the decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.*"

The first of our propositions is further confirmed, by the correspondence of the current language of Scripture with the meaning of this particular type, as it has now been explained. The doctrine of atonement, or propitiation, pervades the whole of the inspired volume.—The following passages, and expressions, are only a selection, to which a great many more of a similar kind might be added.—"He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquities of us all:"—"For the transgression of my people was he stricken:"—"Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin:"—"He shall bear their iniquities:"—"He bare the sin of many:"—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world:"—"The son of man is come—to give his life a ransom for many:"—"This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins:"—"The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world:"—"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him:"—"Who gave himself for our sins:"—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:"—"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins:"—"Who gave himself a ransom for all:"—"Now once, in the end of the

world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself:"—"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"—"Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself:"—"He made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:"—"Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree:"—"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God:"—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin:"—And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world:"—"Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood—be glory and dominion for ever, and ever. Amen!"—"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."*

If such passages as these, which are taken from the prophets, from John the Baptist, from Christ himself, and from his apostles, do not convey the ideas of substitution and atonement, is it possible, by human language, to convey these ideas at all? What other words and phrases could we select, if it were our special desire to express them more distinctly?

In these passages, you will have perceived, there is a very frequent reference, when the death of Christ is spoken of, to the *sacrifices* of the Old dispensation.—Now, although the victims which were slain at the altar, and "whose blood was brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin," could

* Isa. liii. 5, 6, 7, 12. John i. 29. Matth. xx. 28. xxvi. 28. John vi. 51. Rom. v. 6—9. Gal. i. 4. iii. 13. Eph. i. 7. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Heb. ix. 26, 14. vii. 27. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 24. iii. 18. 1 John i. 7. ii. 2. Rev. i. 5, 6. v. 9.

not, by any virtue of their own, take away the guilt of transgression, so as to save the sinner from his future eternal punishment:—(this the apostle affirms was "not possible," and its impossibility was indicated by the constant repetition of the same stated offerings:) yet they were beyond all reasonable question, propitiatory in their nature:—"their blood was brought into the sanctuary *for sin;*" and they procured, when duly offered, the remission of its temporal consequences. Some of them were appointed for ceremonial omissions and uncleannesses, and others for the transgression of precepts more directly of a moral nature. But the general idea of atonement pervades and characterizes the whole. It seems to have been the principle on which the Mosaic Law was framed, that "*without shedding of blood there could be no remission.*"—In this marked and prominent feature of its character, it was prefigurative of the true atonement that was to be made for sin in "the fulness of time." It was in this way especially—by typical illustration,—that God's method of justifying the ungodly was, as the apostle expresses it in the 20th verse, "*witnessed by the law.*"—Divest these rites of their typical import, and they become utterly unworthy of the wisdom by which they were appointed. Worthless in themselves, their sole value arose from their being "figures of that which was to come." And from their nature, as described in the law, they could not, if they were types at all, be typical of any thing else than of a true and proper sacrifice for sin.—The animal sacrifices which, from the sacred history, we know to have been offered before the law, even from the earliest times, had the same typical meaning and design. They were only imbodied, and, perhaps, at the same time, multiplied and varied, in the Mosaic ritual;—that law of which the leading object is expressed by Paul, when he denominates it, "a schoolmaster (to direct) to Christ."

If we admit the hypothesis, that the redemption of a lost world by the propitiatory sacrifice of the Son of God, was, from the beginning, the Divine intention, we are furnished with a ready and satisfactory explanation of what otherwise, notwithstanding all the ingenious attempts of philosophical men to account for it, remains involved in inexplicable mystery,—I mean the *origin of animal sacrifice*, and the universal traditionary prevalence of it amongst mankind. On the supposition in question, nothing can be simpler or more natural:—on any other, the subject is full of difficulty and perplexity.

No sooner had Adam fallen, than the remedy was revealed, in the form of promise, for the ruin which he had brought upon himself, and entailed on his future race. By the institution of such sacrifices, the particular *nature* of the intended remedy was intimated. For, in this singular rite, the pious worshipper was reminded, on the one hand, for his humiliation, of the forfeiture of his own life,—of the death which he deserved on account of sin; and, on the other, for his consolation, and peace, and joy, of the promised substitution of another in his stead, to bear his sin, to atone for its guilt, and to save him from its punishment. This institution, having been continued through the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, formed afterwards, as we have seen, a very prominent part of the Mosaic ritual. Its object was still the same. The law, by its sentence of condemnation, against which it provided, in itself, no adequate remedy, "shut up" those who were under it "to the faith which was afterwards to be revealed;" whilst by its various rites it shadowed forth that faith to the mind of the attentive and devout inquirer;—showing it obscurely,—as if through a veil; discovering, yet concealing; "the shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things."—On this hypothesis, there is a

harmony between the Old dispensation and the New, and a unity of design throughout the whole history of the Divine procedure towards mankind, which we seek for in vain on any other principle.

When we speak of the *sacrificial language*, (if I may so express myself) of the New Testament, in reference to the death of Christ, it is not unusual to resolve it all into *figure* and *allusion*.—It has even been conceived, that at the death of Christ there was an accommodation, or purposed providential resemblance, in facts and circumstances, to the ancient institutions, such as rendered the allusions to them by the New Testament writers, when they speak of that event, natural and appropriate.—To this singular fancy we offer two replies. In the first place, if the idea was not meant to be conveyed of something in the nature and design of the death of Christ directly corresponding to what was understood to be the nature and design of the ancient offerings,—of something, that is, truly and properly sacrificial and expiatory,—such allusions were fitted to mislead into conceptions altogether erroneous, on a subject of the very last importance.—In the second place, the supposition of such an accommodation in the circumstances of the death of Jesus to ancient institutions, is an obvious reversing of the true order of things. The accommodation was in the inverse order to that supposed. It was prospective. The sacrificial institutions, both before and under the law, were so adjusted as to be suitable prefigurations of what was to take place at the fulness of time. To suppose the infinitely wise God to have appointed them on their own account, as an acceptable part of worship to himself, independently of any such reference; and to allege, that the inspired writers of the New Testament, finding these rites in existence, availed themselves of them merely as a source of figurative allusion and illustration,—and that too, in a way

which, on this hypothesis, obscures rather than illustrates their nature: this, I say, discovers a perverseness of mind as melancholy as it is surprising. The great principle of the ancient ritual was, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." But what was the worth, what was the dignity of this principle, or of any lesson that could be involved in it, if the whole sacrificial establishment went no farther than to the remission of the mere temporal penalty of a few particular descriptions of trespass under the existing economy?—no farther than we can suppose the efficacy to reach (if indeed we can suppose it to have in itself any efficacy at all) of the worthless blood of a bull or a he-goat? To what contemptible insignificance and littleness does such a supposition reduce the entire system! How very different does it appear, when, assuming the apostolic principle—"it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"—we contemplate all as a system of shadows, divinely adapted to foreshow and prepare for the grand New Covenant atonement! This at once gives meaning and consistency and glory to the whole. It shows us a purpose answered by it worthy of the wisdom of its Author: and every attempt to reconcile it with his infinite wisdom on any other ground has proved utterly abortive.—The hypothesis, then, which resolves the sacrificial language of the New Testament into mere figure and allusion, is one which at once deprives the language of *its* meaning, and the rites alluded to of *theirs*.—It is one, which besides, charges the writers with singular folly. No idea could well be simpler, or more easily expressed, than that of a prophet's dying to confirm his testimony, or rather to prove his sincerity in delivering it, (for his submitting to sufferings and death could prove no more than this,) or even to afford, in his own rising from the grave, the evidence and the pledge of a future resurrection. Why such language as that which

has been quoted should be so constantly used to express such ideas as these, if these were indeed the ideas intended to be conveyed, is a question which can hardly be answered, on any principle consistent with the inspiration, or even with the common sense of the writers.—If the death of Christ was not an atonement for sin,—the law and the prophets, Jesus himself, his forerunner, and his apostles, all spoke a language which is to me utterly unintelligible; and which could not have more effectually deceived, had it been framed for the express purpose of deception.

So much for our first proposition, that it is in consideration of the sacrifice of Christ, that God is propitious to sinners.

II. I now proceed to show, *in the second place*, that IN PARDONING THE GUILTY ON THIS GROUND, GOD DISPLAYS HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

This is obviously the very spirit of the text:—"to *declare his righteousness* for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to *declare* at this time *his righteousness, that he might be just*, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

The proper idea of *propitiation* is, *rendering the Divine Being propitious, or favourable.*—We must beware, however, of understanding by this, any thing like the production of a change in the Divine character; as if the blessed God required a motive to pity, an inducement to be merciful, a price for love and grace. Far be such a thought from our minds! We ought to conceive of Jehovah as eternally, infinitely, and immutably, compassionate and merciful. That any transition is produced in his nature, by the mediation of Christ, from previous vindictive cruelty to benevolence and pity, (as the adversaries of the doctrine of atonement are

either through ignorance or from a worse principle, accustomed to speak) is a supposition full of blasphemous impiety. God has been from eternity, and to eternity must continue, the same; "without variableness or shadow of turning." Being absolutely perfect, he cannot change to the better; for perfection cannot be improved. The slightest alteration, therefore, of what he is, would deduct from that infinite excellence, without which he could not be God.—But while God is infinitely and immutably *good*, he is, at the same time, infinitely and immutably *holy*, and *just*, and *true*. We ought never, indeed, to speak of him as acting at one time according to justice, and at another according to mercy; if by this mode of expression it be meant, that in any part of his procedure, in the smallest possible degree, the claims either of mercy or of justice are ever suspended, or left out of view. He never acts in opposition to the one, or to the other, but always agreeably to both. He is never just without being merciful, nor merciful without being just.

The character of God is, PERFECT EXCELLENCE—INFINITE GOODNESS:—not a hemisphere of separate stars, but one glorious Sun of pure and holy light. The attributes which constitute this character, although we may speak of them, and reason about them, distinctly, are completely inseparable in their exercise;—united in the *conduct* of the Almighty Agent, by the same necessity which unites them in his *nature*.—That nature being one and immutable, with no part of it can any step of his procedure ever be inconsistent; but all should be considered as the result, not of one attribute, or of another, but of that glorious combination of all excellences, which constitutes INFINITE PERFECTION.—The light of the sun we can divide, by a prism, into its various coloured rays; and each of these rays we can make the object of distinct attention:—but it is the combination of all the seven that consti-

tutes *light*,—of which its colourless purity is the prime excellence. Thus may we make the various perfections of the Divine nature the subjects, one by one, of separate consideration:—but it is the union of them all, in inseparable existence and exercise, that forms the character of that infinite Being, of whom, with exquisite beauty and sublime simplicity, it is said, "GOD IS LIGHT; AND IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL."

What, then, is the light in which the doctrine of atonement places the Divine Being?—In reply to this question, I observe: that, as a righteous Lawgiver and Ruler, Jehovah must be considered as displeased with his gnilty creatures, on account of their violation of his authority;—whilst, at the same time, from the infinite benignity of his nature, he is inclined to forgiveness. But if his government be righteous, its claims, in their full extent, must, of necessity, be preserved inviolate. Any change in these must be a change from right to wrong; and must affect both the immutable holiness of the Divine character, and the general good of the universe. The principles of the Divine administration, the commands and the sanctions of God's law, if admitted to have been originally right, can never undergo alteration; for alteration of any kind, even in the way of mitigation or reduction, implies the acknowledgment of error in the first enactments.

The great question, then, on this momentous subject, comes to be:—"IN WHAT MANNER *may forgiveness be extended to the guilty, so as to satisfy the claims of infinite justice, and thus to maintain in their full dignity, free from every charge of imperfection or of mutability, the character of the Governor, the rectitude of his administration, and the sanction of his law?*"

The rendering of the Divine Being propitious, in this view, refers, it is obvious, (and the distinction is one of the highest importance on this subject) not to the *production* of love in his character, or in the state of his mind towards fallen men, but

simply to the *mode of its expression.* The inquiry is, How may the blessed God express his love, so as effectually to express, at the same time, his infinite and immutable abhorrence of sin; and thus, in "making known the riches of his mercy," to display, in connexion with it, the inflexibility of his justice, and the unsullied perfection of his holiness?

I am well aware how pertinaciously the adversaries of the doctrine of atonement persist in misrepresenting it:—and it is matter of regret, that any of its well-meaning friends should have used at times such unguarded modes of expression as to give their misrepresentations an apparent countenance. I have already said, there can be no change in God. The atonement must not be considered as rendering him merciful and placable, from having been previously wrathful and vindictive. He "delighteth in mercy." This is the character of his nature, antecedently to, and irrespectively of, all atonement. He does not delight in mercy because the atonement has been made; but the atonement has been made, because he delights in mercy. A being naturally implacable and merciless, would never appoint an atonement in order to the exercise of mercy. The very appointment manifests a character the reverse of severe vindictiveness. It could be the dictate only of mercy. And so it is invariably represented in the Scriptures;—not as the parent, but as the offspring of mercy,—not its producer, but its product,—not its cause, but its effect and expression. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:"—"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins:"—"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." How then can that ever be regarded as purchasing or producing mercy, which is its free

and marvellous manifestation?—Let me illustrate my meaning by a very simple comparison. If a son had grievously transgressed against his father's authority, and incurred his merited displeasure;—would it be an evidence of the want or even of the deficiency of the tenderness of natural affection in the parent's heart, if, in seeking to extend forgiveness to his child, he should concert measures for doing this in such a way, as at once to humble to proper penitential submission the proud spirit of the offender, and to secure the respect due to his own authority? His bowels may yearn over his child: his heart may go forth towards him in the longings of agonized affection: his eye may "pour forth tears unto God" for him. But his judgment tells him, that he must keep his place. He must not yield to unsubdued stubbornness; he must not break his sceptre, and resign his parental superiority. If in these painfully trying circumstances, the wisdom of the father should suggest to him a method, by which his rightful authority might be recognized and established, and, at the same time, the heart of his child melted to a return of filial tenderness, the fountain of tears opened, and the spirit of sullenness won to penitent submission;—would it be reasonable to allege, were such a suggestion followed out, that it had produced a change in the heart of the father—that it had introduced parental love where it was not before? No conclusion, surely, would be more destitute of truth. This love not only existed, but longed intensely to give itself expression; and the bosom of the fond father filled to overflowing with delight and joy, when the suggestion presented itself that opened a free channel for its unrestrained emotions.—Thus it is with regard to the Divine Father and his guilty children. His mercy is from everlasting. But his mercy must be exercised in a way which shall glorify his righteousness;—that shall "declare" and illustrate the justice of his character and

government, in the exercise of his forgiveness, and the bestowment of his favour. This is what we conceive to be effected by ATONEMENT.

When we say that God is displeased with any of his creatures, we speak of them not as *creatures*, but as *sinners*. He hath sworn by himself, that "he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked." But he hates sin:—not as possessing any power to affect his own infinite, independent, and unchanging happiness and glory, (I mean his *essential* glory;) for as to these, it may well be asked, "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous, or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect? Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into judgment?"—"If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thy hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man."* But he hates sin—as contrary to his holy nature, hiding his glory from the eyes of his intelligent creatures, and, in proportion to the extent of its prevalence, tending to the destruction of the order and happiness of the universe.—When we speak of *hatred* as existing in the infinite mind, we ought, it is true, to beware of associating with it any idea of passion or turbulent emotion. But to make it a question whether God be displeased with sin, and with sinners, is to confound good and evil together; to divest the human mind of all its salutary fears of judgment to come; and to dispute the propriety of God's own language on this momentous subject. In the scriptures we find it affirmed, that God is "*angry with*

* Job xxii. 2—4. xxxv. 6—8.

the wicked every day;" that he "*hateth all the workers of iniquity;*" that he hath "revealed from heaven *his wrath* against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;"—and the "children of disobedience" are denominated "*children of wrath.*" When God, on the other hand, forgives iniquity, he is, in perfect consistency with such expressions, represented as "*turning from the fierceness of his anger, and taking away all his wrath;*" as "*not retaining his anger* for ever, because he delighteth in mercy;"—as "*pacified*" towards the objects of his forgiveness, "notwithstanding all that they have done:"—and they who before were "children of wrath," are described as then saying, with holy and humble joy, "O Lord, I will praise thee; for though thou wast angry with me, *thine anger is turned away.*"—This is PROPITIATION: and it is *in Christ Jesus*, as we have already seen, that God is thus propitious to sinners.

It is of great importance that we entertain correct conceptions of the sense in which the righteousness of God is "declared," or manifested, by the atonement.—Justice, in discussions on moral and political science, has been considered as of three kinds: *commutative*, *distributive*, and *public*.—Commutative justice is that which subsists between a creditor and a debtor, and has reference to pecuniary or commercial transactions. In such transactions, if the debt be paid, no matter whether by the debtor himself or by a surety, the claim of justice is cancelled; and no room is left for the exercise of any thing that bears the nature of *grace*.—And here it is necessary to remark, that by some the idea of debt and credit has been applied with too literal a strictness to the case now before us,—in a way that is fitted to confound in the mind things that are essentially different.—That sins are compared to debts is true; and the comparison is natural, and the principle of it obvious. As intelligent and moral

agents, we *owe obedience* to God, our Maker and Sovereign. As sinners, we have failed to render that obedience: and every sin, both of omission and of commission, may be regarded as an additional accumulation of unpaid debt. But our discharging this debt ourselves is a *natural impossibility.* In this respect, as well as in another which we shall notice immediately, the parallelism between sins and debts necessarily fails. We never can *pay up obedience* which we have failed to render, as a man may, by payment of principal and interest, cancel the heaviest arrears of debt to another.—Again: when we have offended against God, we may be said to *owe satisfaction,* or reparation for the injury we have done to his law, and to the honour of his name and government. But with regard to us, this satisfaction can be nothing else than punishment; punishment corresponding to the demerit of sin. As obedience is due from us to God; so, when we disobey, punishment is due from God to us. Hence it is said, "the *wages* of sin is death:"—death being that which sin deserves, or which is justly and legally due to the sinner on account of it.

The forgiveness of sin is simply the free remission of its punishment. It is not the doing away of its guilt; or such a cancelling of the accumulated obligation involved in it, as that the sinner ceases to be guilty, and to deserve punishment. This is, in the nature of things, impossible. Here lies the other point, in which the parallel between sins and debts has been pressed too closely. A debt of *property* may be paid by another: a debt of *obedience* (and such was the debt we owed to God) never can. It is, in its very nature, intransferable. The sinner, in himself considered, can never, through eternity, cease to be guilty and to deserve punishment. His transgressions have constituted him guilty. These have been done, and never can be undone. The lapse of eternal ages,

the interposition of omnipotence itself, cannot effect this,—cannot render a guilty creature an innocent creature. The sinner who enters heaven will enjoy it for ever as one who, in himself, merits nothing but exile from its holy pleasures. No substitution, no atonement, can, in this respect, alter the nature of things. The atonement of Christ, then, ought not, we think, to be regarded as at all proceeding on the principles of commutative or commercial justice; inasmuch as the payment of debt, according to this description of justice, by strictly and properly cancelling all claim, leaves no room for the exercise of grace.

Distributive justice has regard not to pecuniary obligation, but to moral character, and to the desert thence arising either of reward or of punishment. According to it, the sinner should receive, *in his own person*, the due recompense of his deeds. The strict principles of distributive justice do not admit of substitution,—of one suffering in the room of another. The sentence of every law is against the transgressor of it; and the divine law, in this respect, agrees with other laws. It condemns the sinner personally, and makes no mention of any way in which another can bear his penalty for him. Every man, according to direct legal prescription, must die for his own sin; and it is only by the death of the sinner himself that the proper demand of the law can be fulfilled, and the principles of distributive justice have their due application. The idea of the substitution of the sufferings of another for those of the transgressor himself, is something not inconsistent indeed with law, but beyond it. It is entirely above the line of strict distributive justice,—that is, of justice in its ordinary acceptation in regard to rewards and punishments,—according to which every man should have his due.—Substitution, therefore, is not according to the letter of the law, nor does it literally satisfy its demands. It is not the guilty, in

that case, that suffers, but the innocent:—not he whom the law has condemned, but he whom, personally considered, the law acquits and justifies. The strict principles of distributive justice are, by substitution, not fulfilled, but, for a special purpose, by an act of divine sovereignty, superseded. For surely it is not necessary to expose the absurdity of the fancy, that the innocent substitute, by the imputation to him of the sins of those for whom he suffers, actually becomes the sinner. This is the mere fiction of a bewildered mind. Neither does the substitute become the sinner, nor does the sinner, by any kind of interest he can have in the substitute, become innocent or meritorious. The sins of the sinner are still *his* sins, though the substitute suffers on account of them:—the righteousness of the substitute is still *his* righteousness, though the sinner is pardoned on account of it. The pardon of the sinner is simply the remission of his punishment, not the cessation of his guilt.—In substitution, then, neither Christ nor the sinner is dealt with according to the terms of law, or of distributive justice:—for the guilty, who according to these should suffer, escapes; and the innocent, who should escape, suffers. There is in this an evident setting aside of these terms; nor can it, we think, in strict propriety of speech, be said that, by atonement, justice, in its distributive sense, is satisfied; inasmuch as its direct requisitions are not fulfilled, but its principles, on the contrary, are overruled. It is satisfied, however, in another sense,—in that all its ends are virtually and effectually answered, by other means.

But it is to the *third* of the senses in which the term *justice* is used, that the great purposes of atonement have immediate reference. *Public justice* includes those great general principles of equity, according to which, in union with benevolence, the Sovereign Ruler governs the intelligent universe. To preserve unsullied the glory of these,—to show the impossibility of

their being dispensed with—to settle in the minds of his rational creatures the paramount obligation and immutable permanence of their claims—to give such a manifestation of the divine regard to them, as the principles of his immaculate government, as to preclude the possibility of its being said, or thought, that in the pardon of sinners they have been unheeded, or in the slightest degree infringed upon,—and thus to render it consistent with Divine propriety, or, in other words, honourable to the united perfections of the Divine character, to extend forgiveness to the guilty and receive them back to his favour, agreeably to the provisions of the gospel;—this is the end of atonement. It is in this sense, we conceive, that the Divine righteousness is represented, in the text, as "declared," or manifested, by the propitiation offered in the blood of Christ. His infinite and unchanging regard to the great principles of his holy and equitable administration is attested and published, in such a manner, as that in "justifying him who believeth in Jesus," his righteousness may be as conspicuous as his mercy, and, in the minds of the pardoned, the impression of the claims of the one as deep as that of their obligations to the other.

The two great ends of *public justice* are, the glory of God, and, in connexion with it, the general good of his creatures. —It is essentially necessary to the attainment of these ends, that the authority of the government of God should be supported, in all its extent, as inviolably sacred;—that one jot or one tittle should in no wise pass from the law;—that no sin, of any kind, or in any degree, should appear as venial; —that if any sinner is pardoned, it should be in such a way as, while it displays the Divine mercy, shall at the same time testify the Divine abhorrence of his sins.—It is to be considered as a fixed principle of the Divine government, that *sin must be punished;* that, if the sinner is pardoned, it must be in a

way that *marks* and *publishes the evil of his offence.* This is effected by substitution; and, as far as we can judge, could not be effected in any other way. In laying the sins of transgressors on the voluntary and all-sufficient substitute, to be atoned for by his vicarious sufferings, JEHOVAH, while he clears the sinner, does not clear his sins;—although clothed with the thunders of vindictive justice against transgression, he wears to the transgressor the smile of reconciliation and peace;—he dispenses the blessings of mercy from the throne of his holiness;—and, while exercising grace to the guilty, he appears in the character—equally lovely and venerable—of

> —— the sinner's friend,
> And sin's eternal foe!

In this way, then, all the ends of *public justice* are fully answered. The law retains its complete unmitigated perfection; is "magnified and made honourable:"—the dignity and authority of the government are maintained, and even elevated:—all the perfections of Deity are gloriously illustrated, and exhibited in sublime harmony:—while the riches of mercy are displayed, for the encouragement of sinners to return to God, the solemn lesson is at the same time taught, by a most convincing example, that rebellion cannot be persisted in with impunity; and motives are thus addressed to the fear of evil as well as to the desire of good:—such a view of the Divine Being is presented in the cross, as is precisely calculated to inspire and to maintain (to maintain, too, with a power which will increase in influence the more closely and seriously the view is contemplated,) the two great principles of a holy life—the LOVE, and the FEAR OF GOD;—filial attachment, freedom, and confidence, combined with humble reverence and holy dread.

While it appears a most important scriptural truth, that

something equivalent, in the eye of Divine Justice, to the punishment of the sinner, was, in the view and for the reasons which have been stated, absolutely necessary in order to his escape, I do not think there is any thing in the word of God, that warrants the representation which has been given, by some of the friends of this doctrine, as if the sufferings of Christ formed what they call *an exact equivalent*—neither less nor more—for the sins of all who shall be saved by his atonement.—This sentiment seems derogatory to the infinite dignity of the Sufferer, and the consequent infinite value of his sacrifice. The sufferings of the Son of God ought not to be brought into comparison, as a display of the Divine righteousness, with even the eternal sufferings of millions of his creatures.—The idea of exact equivalent proceeds on the supposition, that the sufferings of Christ possessed just as much virtue, as is sufficient for the salvation of all who shall be saved; whose precise proportion of punishment he is conceived to have borne, according to the guilt even of each particular sin.—I know not how *you* may feel, my brethren:—but *my* mind, I own, revolts from this sort of minutely calculating process on such a subject; weighing out the precise quantum of suffering due to each sin of each individual who obtains forgiveness; and there, of course, limiting the sufficiency of the surety's mediation.—There is too much in it of the littleness of a mercantile reckoning,—of the balancing of a debtor and creditor account; of the introduction of the principles of *commutative* justice where they have nothing to do; or of the overstraining of those of *distributive* justice in a case which is beyond their range, and to which they cannot apply.—Such views have always appeared to me utterly inconsistent with the grandeur and majesty of this wonderful part of the Divine administration.

The mediation of Christ, I am disposed to view as a grand

general manifestation of "the righteousness of God," by which the claims of justice are, in the spirit of them, fully satisfied, and the glory of this attribute thus maintained, in the exercise of mercy:—a *general remedy*, admitting, *according to the Divine pleasure and purpose*, of a *particular application*.—There is an obvious and important difference between the *sufficiency* of any remedy, and its *efficiency*. The former arises from the nature of the remedy itself;—the latter depends on its being applied. The former, therefore, may even be infinite, while the latter is purposely limited. The blood of Christ may be infinite in its atoning *value*, and yet limited in its atoning *efficacy*; *sufficient* for the salvation of *all*, and yet *effectual* to the salvation of *some* only.

It is in this way, then, that God appears, in the gospel testimony, in that view of his character which is to us the most deeply interesting of all the lights in which he has been pleased to make himself known,—as "*the just God*, and *a Saviour*." It is in the cross of Christ, in the work which *he* finished, when he "bowed his head, and gave up the ghost," that "mercy and truth meet together—that righteousness and peace embrace each other."—To the sinner, it is, from first to last, a free salvation. God's instituting any means at all for securing the honour of his righteousness in bestowing pardon on the guilty, when his character, as the just God, would have remained unimpeachable, had he consigned all transgressors to the doom which they merited, was itself an act of free, unsolicited grace. And even now, when these means have been revealed, there is no *claim of right* on the part of the sinner, who receives the blessing. Although we have "boldness, and access to God with confidence, through the faith of Jesus," yet even when we come in the name of the Mediator, we are taught to approach as *suppliants*, rather than as *claimants*; not demanding a debt, but entreating for a favour;

pleading, with all the deep self-abasement of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"—While, in forgiving sin, in justifying the ungodly, God acts in perfect consistency with justice as well as with mercy,—to the sinner himself it is entirely a matter of mercy, pure and unconditional. He is "justified *freely, by God's grace*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

It has been asserted by some, that the doctrine of *atonement* is incompatible with that of *free forgiveness*.—Let the words of the apostle which I have just quoted, contained in the verse immediately preceding the text, silence, as they ought to do, every such objection.—He here distinctly affirms, that the justification of the sinner is *free*—that is, *without any cause in him;* that it is *by grace*—that is, as an act of *sovereign unmerited favour*,—and yet that it is, *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*.—In other places also, he uses language of exactly the same import:—"*In whom* we have redemption *by his blood*, the forgiveness of sins, *according to the riches of his grace*."*—It is evident, from such passages, that Paul perceived not the inconsistency, which the refinement of modern objectors presumes it has discovered. And I think we may be perfectly satisfied, to be in the same mistake with an inspired apostle.—The truth is, had the atonement proceeded at all upon the principles of commutative justice, the objection would have been well-founded; for these, as we have noticed, are exclusive of grace:—or had there been such an engagement to save as proceeded upon the stipulation of an exact equivalent, on the part of the substitute, for the amount of suffering due, on the grounds of distributive justice, to the individuals comprehended in that engagement, the rebutting of it would not have been without difficulty:—but according

* Eph. i. 7.

to the view we have taken of the atonement (which we are satisfied is the view of the text and of scripture in general), neither of these is the case. I believe in the doctrine of election. But election, I apprehend, proceeded on no such principle as that of a *stipulated exact equivalent* in the sufferings of the Mediator. The atonement left the Divine Being, in this respect, at perfect liberty to pardon whom he would; only, in every case in which he does pardon, he bestows the blessing, in consequence of the atonement, honourably to his righteousness.

It has likewise been seriously objected to the doctrine in question, that it never can be reconciled with the justice of God, to permit the innocent to suffer for the guilty.

Perhaps it should be enough to remind those who urge this objection, not only that the substitution and sufferings of Christ were entirely *voluntary;* but that, according to the view which we take of his person, they *could not possibly have been otherwise;* inasmuch as, previously to his assuming the form of a servant, he had no superior that could lay him under any obligation, nor would he, therefore, have violated any, had he never acted the part he did. His own will alone could bind him. His "becoming flesh" was an act of sovereign condescension; and in all that he endured, in the nature which he had voluntarily assumed, he was a willing sufferer.

But let me take up the objection in another light. According to the terms in which it is expressed, it proceeds on the supposition of the *innocence* of the sufferer.—Is this, then, admitted? One hardly can tell whether our opponents admit it or not. They certainly can "find no fault in this man." Yet one presumes to speak of him as "*fallible and peccable;*" —another says, we have *no sufficient data by which to determine whether during his private as well as his public life he was free from sin or not; and that it is to us a matter of no material*

*consequence!**—But "what saith the Scripture?"—"Such an high priest became us, who is *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*, and made higher than the heavens: who *needeth not daily*, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, *first for his own sins*, and then for the people's:"—"He *did no sin*, neither was guile found in his mouth:"—"Ye are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, *without blemish and without spot:*"—"He was manifested to take away our sins; and *in him is no sin.*"† Are not these declarations sufficient to satisfy every mind that feels itself bound by the authority of the Scriptures?—Taking for granted, then, the *perfect innocence* of Jesus Christ, let us consider *the fact* precisely as it stands. Here is *an innocent person suffering;* suffering both in body and in mind, (if we are to judge from his own expressions of inward agony, and from the effects of that agony on his bodily frame) in a degree unprecedented and inconceivable.—Let the objector, then, account for this strange phenomenon in the government of a righteous God.—Why, we ask, does he suffer? Not on his own account. The supposition of innocence forbids this; for all suffering arises from sin.—Why, then, does he suffer? To confirm, by evincing his sincerity, the truth of his testimony, and to set before us an example of patience? The objector forgets himself when he alleges this as the cause. Let him recollect, that this is still suffering *for us,—for our good.* Let him answer, therefore, his own objection. If it be *just* in God to allow the innocent to suffer for *these* ends; why should it be unjust in him to allow the innocent to suffer for *another* end—even for the end which *we* allege to have been the true cause of these sufferings?—Can it be *just* in God to inflict sufferings on the innocent for an *inferior* end, and yet *unjust* in him to inflict

* Priestley and Belsham.

† Heb. vii. 26, 27, 1 Peter ii. 22. i. 19. 1 John iii. 5.

the same sufferings, on the same person, for an end *obviously and incalculably superior?*—The fact of an innocent sufferer being once admitted, the only scriptural, and, in my apprehension, the only rational (because the only adequate) reason of the fact, and solution of the difficulty arising from it, is,—"God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—So strongly does the matter appear in this light to my mind, that I should almost affirm the very existence of the fact to be, of itself, a sufficient evidence of the doctrine.

It has further been objected, that when, in the New Testament, *reconciliation* is spoken of, it is not the reconciliation *of God to sinners*, but *of sinners to God*:—as in the following instances:—"All things are of God, who hath *reconciled us to himself* by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in (or by) Christ *reconciling the world unto himself*, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us; we pray (men) in Christ's stead, *Be ye reconciled to God:* for he hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:"—"If, when we were *enemies*, we were *reconciled to God* by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."*

I need not enlarge on this. Two or three brief observations will be sufficient to show the fallacy of the objection. —*In the first place*, We have already seen, that, in many parts of Scripture, words and phrases which are, in their meaning, perfectly *equivalent* with *reconcile* and *reconciliation*, are used respecting the state of God's regard towards sinful creatures;—as when he is said to be *pacified*, and to have his

* 2 Cor. v. 18—21. Rom. v. 10.

anger turned away.—It is not about the *word* we dispute, but about the *thing.*—2*dly*, In the Scriptures, the verb *to reconcile* is used, when the person said *to be reconciled* is not the *offended* party, but the *offender;* in which cases, it manifestly signifies not the removal of enmity in the heart of him who is said *to be reconciled,* but the averting of displeasure, and the obtaining of favour, in the bosom of him *to whom he is reconciled.* For example:—Matth. v. 23, 24. "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother *hath ought against thee,* leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first *be reconciled to thy brother,* and then come, and offer thy gift."—The person addressed is not supposed to have any thing against his brother, but to recollect that his brother has something against him. His brother is the aggrieved party. Yet it is not said, "*Reconcile thy brother to thee;*" but, "*Be reconciled to thy brother.*" The former, however, is evidently what is meant—"Make peace with thy brother:—by becoming acknowledgments and submission, regain his lost favour, and restore the exercise of mutual affection."—Another instance, equally conclusive, of the same use of the word, occurs in 1 Sam. xxix. 4. "And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him (that is with Achish); and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow (David) return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him; and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he *reconcile himself to his master?* should it not be with the heads of these men?"—Saul, David's master, was the *offended* party. Yet David is not said to *reconcile his master to him,* but to *reconcile himself to his master. Obtaining favour with his master,* however, is, beyond all dispute, what is intended to be expressed.—These instances are completely decisive, as to the use of the term for which we contend.

And, agreeably to this view of its meaning, when sinners are said to *be reconciled to God*, the expression includes in it not merely the relinquishment of their enmity against him, but also the turning away of his displeasure against them. It means, in short, the bringing of the parties into a state of *mutual friendship.*—*3dly*, That this is the case, is clear from the very passages, in the epistles to the Corinthians and to the Romans, before quoted.—In the former of those passages, God's "*reconciling the world to himself* by Jesus Christ," is explained by his "*not imputing their trespasses unto them:*" that is, by forgiveness he brings sinners into a state of favour and acceptance with himself.—As to the latter passage, its connexion with the preceding verse is sufficient to show, that the meaning of *being reconciled* is there the same:—"Much more, then, being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were *reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." If *reconciliation to God*, by the death of his Son, is not here *inclusive* at least of being *justified by his blood*, there is neither continuity nor conclusiveness in the apostle's reasoning.

Lastly; it has been alleged, that the whole of this scheme of atonement is *unnecessary;*—a useless incumbrance:—for that God might, with perfect propriety, forgive sinners, *upon their repentance*, without any such additional consideration.

What the infinitely wise and righteous God might, or might not, with propriety, do, in such a case,—it hardly, perhaps, comes within our province to determine. Our safest and most becoming way of proceeding, in such circumstances, is, I should think, to form our judgment from the fact;—to consider what God has actually done, and thence to conclude, what was or was not proper for him to do. If God could, with perfect consistency and propriety, have pardoned sin

without any such atonement as we believe has been made for it, we may, with great safety, conclude, from what we know both of his wisdom and of his goodness, that the atonement would never have been heard of:—for a *wise* being does nothing in vain; and a *good* being inflicts no suffering in vain. Surely when the blessed Redeemer, perfectly pure and holy, and the object of unmingled approbation and love, thrice prayed, in agony of spirit, that *if it were possible* the cup might pass from him,—he would never have been permitted to drink it,—to drink it even to its bitterest dregs, had not his drinking it been indispensable;—had it not been necessary to the reconciliation of justice and mercy, in their exercise towards guilty men.

I have before endeavoured to answer, on this subject, the question, What saith the Scripture?—and, at the same time, to show the reasonableness of the plan which the blessed God is therein represented as having adopted, in order to his being, consistently with the glory of *his whole character*, "the GOD OF SALVATION."—We have seen, in this discussion, the only ground on which, according to the gospel, pardon is bestowed. That it is ever bestowed on the ground of mere *repentance*, is not the doctrine of the Bible.—Neither can it be shown, I would now add, to be the doctrine of Reason. *Analogy* is against it. Repentance and reformation do not, in the present experience of mankind, place transgressors, with regard to the temporal effects of their sins, in the same state as if they never had offended. The ruined health and fortune of the intemperate are not retrieved the instant they repent and reform.—Besides: present obedience can only fulfil present obligation. There is, as has frequently been observed, as good ground for affirming that former obedience atones for present sins, as there is for affirming that present obedience atones for antecedent transgression. Repentance neither

alters the nature, nor annihilates the guilt of what is past: and present duty, even if it were free from all mixture of imperfection, can do no more than answer for itself. It cannot possess the nature and efficacy of *works of supererogation*, for our former selves, any more than it can for others.

Reason, then, to say the least of it, can arrive at no certain conclusion on this subject; and it becomes us to submit, with grateful humility, to the way of acceptance made known in the gospel. Repentance is *inseparably connected* with forgiveness;—but it is not its *procuring cause*—its *meritorious ground. This* is to be found only in the perfect obedience, and atoning death, of the Son of God:—and apart from faith in him, and dependance upon his righteousness and sacrifice as the foundation of acceptance, there exists no repentance that is genuine and scriptural.

I must now hasten forward to the remaining observations which shall be illustrated with much greater brevity.

III. THE GROUND ON WHICH THE PARDON OF SIN HAS BEEN BESTOWED, HAS, IN EVERY AGE, AND UNDER EVERY DISPENSATION, BEEN THE SAME.

This observation is founded on the expression used in verse 25th—"*for the remission of sins that are past* (that is, *which were formerly committed) through* (or *in) the forbearance of God.*"

These words evidently express, the *retrospective efficacy* of the blood of Christ; its efficacy, as the procuring cause of forgiveness to believers who lived before his coming in the flesh. God had before that time *remitted sin*:—and the words in question might, perhaps, be more strictly rendered—"to declare his righteousness, *because of** the remission (or passing

* Διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων.—Διὰ is here used with the accusative: and there can be no doubt that its ordinary signification, when in regimen with

by) of sins formerly committed, in the forbearance of God:" —the sentiment expressed being apparently this;—"that the passing by of sins *at that time*, when no adequate atonement had been made, might have given occasion for the impeachment of the Divine righteousness; and, therefore, this display of the righteousness of God was in due time made, as that to which there had all along been a prospective regard—(as to a pre-determined event)—in the previous exercise of pardoning mercy." This view seems to be confirmed by the emphatical expression "*at this time*," in the 25th verse, which seems to refer to something which required to be done *now*, as having been acted upon in the time preceding.

The truth, then, which is contained in these words, is a highly important and deeply interesting one;—that throughout the whole period of time, from Adam to Christ, the forgiveness of sins was granted "*through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;*"—that God never was "*the justifier*" of any but of such as "*believed in Jesus*," or, as the original words literally mean, "*were of the faith of Jesus.*"*—This faith, it is true, must of necessity have corresponded, in clearness of vision, and in strength of conviction, to the degree of light vouchsafed at the time: but it was not the less real, on account of the comparative obscurity of the revelation; for, in the nature of things, it *could not* regard its object *further than that object was revealed.*—In passing by sin, therefore, in the ages

this case, is *for*, *on account of*, *because of*. I am aware that in the present instance various renderings have been proposed, and more and less ably supported. I am not sure, however, that there is any necessity for departure from the usual signification of the preposition when governing the accusative. The sense given in the Discourse seems to me sufficiently natural, and consistent with the scope of the context; in which the apostle had just before spoken of the Divine method of justifying sinners as having been, in former times, "witnessed by the law and the prophets."

* Δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.

preceding the fulness of time, it appears that God, (to whom the future is as certain as the past—a purpose yet to be executed as sure as what has already been done—"one day," in this respect, "as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day")—it appears, I say, that God then granted the remission of sins "*in his forbearance*," that is, while he was, as it were, *waiting* for the fulness of time, and was regarding, as the ground of his merciful procedure, the work which was then to be done,—the atonement which was then to be made. —"*At this time*,"—the time, for wise reasons, chosen and appointed by himself,—"he *declared his righteousness*," by the advent and atonement of Christ, "*that he might be just*" in having *formerly* justified, and just in *now continuing* to justify, "those who are *of the faith of Jesus*."

What an interesting and impressive view does this give us, my brethren, of the efficacy of the Redeemer's sacrifice!—"What is a man profited," said he himself, "if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* If the salvation of one individual is thus unspeakably valuable, how great must be the preciousness of that offering, by which there are redeemed unto God,—redeemed from everlasting destruction, and raised to the enjoyment of everlasting life and glory,—"a multitude which no man can number!"—That countless multitude which John saw, in vision, assembled before the throne of God and of the Lamb, was not only composed of men "of every people, and kindred, and tongue, and nation," but of men of every successive period of time, from the day when man was doomed to return to the dust, till the day when "death shall be swallowed up of victory."—Then "Adam shall salute his youngest born."—Yet the song of this redeemed company is *one*. There is not one song for the patriarchs,

* Matth. xvi. 26.

and another for the prophets, and a third for the apostles;—one for the saints of the Old, and another for those of the New dispensation:—for patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and saints of every dispensation, have all been alike indebted to the same Redeemer.—The "righteous Abel," the earliest victim of mortality, shall join in the same song with the last of the children of God that falls asleep in Jesus. All, having "washed their robes and made them white in the same blood," shall sing together, without a feeling or a tone of discord—"Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!"

IV. My *fourth* proposition was, that "AN INTEREST IN THE PARDONING MERCY OF GOD, THROUGH CHRIST, IS OBTAINED BY FAITH."

"Whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory, *through faith* in his blood—that he might be just, and the justifier of him *who believeth* in Jesus."

This is the unvarying language of the Bible.—"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that *whosoever believeth in him* should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in him* might not perish, but have everlasting life:"—"He that *believeth on the Son* hath everlasting life; but he that *believeth not the Son* shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."*—To multiply passages to the same effect, would be endless.—To ALL, of every description, who are interested in the virtue of this atonement, faith is alike the *medium* of their interest. This sentiment is decisively expressed in the verses which follow the text:—"Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but

* John iii. 14—16, 36.

by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. Seeing it is one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."

The chief reason why faith is made the medium of justification, is stated in the 16th verse of the following chapter;—"wherefore, it is of faith, *that it might be by grace;*" and the simpler, consequently, our views are, of the nature of justifying faith, the clearer will our perception be of the reign of GRACE in our salvation. For the apostle, in these words, (of which the meaning is in perfect harmony with all his reasonings on the same subject,) represents it as appointed by God to be the medium of a saving interest in the atonement, for this express reason, that it is a medium which, from its very nature, sets aside all works from forming any part of the ground of acceptance, precludes all self-complacent boasting, and secures the entire glory to his own FREE GRACE.

The reasonableness of making faith, or the belief of the testimony of God concerning his Son, the medium of interest in the salvation which that testimony reveals, must at once be apparent to every reflecting mind. In one view, indeed, the connexion arises from the very nature of the thing. The gospel coming to sinners in the form of a *testimony*, it is difficult to imagine any other way in which the blessings revealed in it can be received and enjoyed, except the believing reception of the testimony.—Another important consideration is, that in no other way than by the faith of it, can the testimony be received into the mind, and brought into influential contact with the affections and desires of the heart, so as to become, what the Scriptures always represent it to be, the instrumental means of inward purity, or sanctification.—But

along with these things, there is an obvious general propriety, or seemliness, in the association of the faith of the truth with the possession of its benefits. There is no merit in it. It does not, on its own account, confer any title. But there is a manifest congruity in the proposition, "He that *believeth* shall be saved." The reception of the truth in which salvation is offered, as necessary to a sinner's being a partaker of that salvation, must recommend itself to every reflecting mind, as right, and, if I may so express myself, *decorous*. No one, surely, can conceive it to be proper, that the man who rejects the gospel, refusing to own it as a message from heaven, should nevertheless partake, equally with those who gladly embrace it as such, the precious blessings which it reveals:—that he who persists in despising the atonement, and in slighting and vilifying the great salvation wrought by the Son of God, should yet experience the saving efficacy of his blood.—It is the sovereign and irreversible appointment of that God with whom we have to do, that "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." The sinner who esteems the blood of Jesus as an all-sufficient atonement for sin, and who, as ruined and hopeless, seeks forgiveness and acceptance on the ground of that atonement, "shall in no wise be cast out:" for God is "the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." But the sacrifice can have no saving virtue to any who refuse to acknowledge its necessity, or to confide in its merits. This position I advance, not with inconsiderate levity; not with scornful indifference about the safety of my fellow-sinners; not for the sake of maintaining the consistency of a human system:—but from a deep conviction of its truth, and a solemn, heart-felt impression of its unutterable importance.—To every imputation of uncharitable harshness, my answer is, "To the law and to the testimony." By this standard let the sentiment be impartially tried.

V. My last observation was, that IN RESTING OUR HOPES OF FORGIVENESS ON THE ATONING SACRIFICE OF CHRIST, WE BUILD ON A SURE FOUNDATION.

This observation is founded on two circumstances:—the dignity of the person who is set forth in the gospel, as the true propitiatory;—and the supreme authority of Him by whom he is set forth, as the object of faith, and the ground of acceptance:—"CHRIST JESUS,—whom GOD hath set forth."

When we consider the Divine dignity of the Mediator between God and men, the "great high-priest of our profession;"—when we are assured that our hope is founded on a work that has been finished, and on a sacrifice that has been offered, by him whose name is Immanuel;—we possess a feeling of security, which nothing else whatever can impart.—"*It is* CHRIST *that died.*" "*He offered up* HIMSELF."—It is true, that the human nature alone could obey, and could suffer. But if it be also true, that the human nature of him who obeyed and suffered was associated in his one person with the Divine, that man's mind must be singularly constituted, who does not perceive the difference between what is done and suffered by an ordinary mortal, and what is done and suffered by a man in union with Deity; and who triumphs in the discovery, that this can be no more after all than human merit, and human sufferings. Upon such a principle as this, were a mighty monarch to perform an act of signal condescension and mercy, by voluntarily submitting to various sufferings, for the deliverance of the meanest of his subjects from existing or apprehended misery—it might be said, "*Royalty* cannot act; *Royalty* cannot suffer:—it is the *man* only, and not the *king*, that acts and suffers:—so that the actions and the sufferings of the king should be considered in no other light than as the actions and sufferings of the poorest beggar."—I am aware, that all comparisons of this kind fall infinitely below the

subject which they are brought to illustrate. I have adduced this one, merely to show the futility of the principle on which such objectors proceed.—Besides, the *whole humiliation* of Jesus, including his *assumption* of the human nature, as well as all that he did and suffered in that nature, is the ground of God's satisfaction in his beloved Son, and consequently the procuring cause of forgiveness and blessing to the sinner.*

The doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, then, which I have, in former discourses, been endeavouring to establish, is not, by any means, a useless, insulated truth;—a truth on which no other truths depend. Viewed in connexion with the atonement, which it has been the object of this discourse to illustrate and to prove, it is that which imparted to all that Jesus did and suffered, for the salvation of a lost world, its peculiar value, and its saving efficacy:—it is that which communicates their sublime grandeur to the doctrines of the cross; elevating them above all that "eye had seen, or ear heard, or that had entered into the heart of man to conceive;" —investing the whole Christian system with a radiant and heavenly glory, like that which beamed around the transfigured Saviour on the Holy mount.†

The second source of our security, in resting our hopes on this foundation, is, the authority by which it is here represented as revealed and sanctioned:—"*Whom* GOD *hath set forth.*"

God had set him forth partially, and with comparative obscurity, by the law and the prophets; and he now exhibits him in the gospel, with all the clearness of explicit testimony, as "a propitiatory through faith in his blood."—God was the Sovereign whom our sins had offended, and at whose mercy we consequently lay. He alone, when his creatures had

* See Phil. ii. 6—11.

† This subject will be more fully treated in a subsequent discourse.

"fallen by their iniquity," had a right to determine whether *any* remedy should be appointed for them at all;—and *if any*, what that remedy should be.—If HE, therefore, has made known a ground of hope for the guilty, we cannot, surely, wish for firmer security, or for any higher warrant, or encouragement, to rely on that ground with unshaken confidence. It is Jehovah that hath said, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed."* And we know what this foundation is:—"other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is JESUS CHRIST."†

It is with God, as "the Judge of all," that "we have to do:"—and when we tremble at the thought of his purity and justice, in anticipating our appearance at his dread tribunal, there is nothing that can impart peace to the troubled conscience, and hope to the sinking heart, but the word of that Being himself to whom we have to render our account. Something which He has approved and accepted, and on which he has given us his authority to trust, is absolutely necessary to solid and satisfactory peace;—to peace, of which the source will bear to be thought of and examined.—This we have in the glorious gospel; where "God hath set forth Christ as a propitiatory through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins; that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."—It is the assurance of this that imparts the confidence of hope:—every thing besides this leaves the mind distracted by uncertainty and doubt, or a prey to all the agonies of despair.

No question, then, on this subject, can be conceived of greater importance, than the question, *What is the testimony of God, with regard to the ground of acceptance with himself?*

* Isa. xxviii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 6. † 1 Cor. iii. 11.

—To discover the true answer to this question, let me beseech you to have recourse directly to the word of God. If you believe what is there testified, and imbibe the spirit of those holy men by whom that word was written, your language will be,—and it will come from a glowing heart—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." —"I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:—I count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith."—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God even his Father,—to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen!"*

I shall devote next Discourse to the consideration of the *practical tendency and influence* of the doctrine which I have now been illustrating, and endeavouring to establish as the doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.†

* Gal. vi. 14. Phil. iii. 8, 9. Rev. i. 5, 6.

† On the doctrines of substitution, sacrifice, and atonement, as well as on a great variety of important collateral topics, the reader will find a vast body of valuable information, acute reasoning, and learned critical disquisition, in the "Discourses and Dissertations" of Dr. Magee, of Trinity College, Dublin, now Bishop of Dublin, formerly referred to.—See also Jerram's "Letters on the Atonement:"—Fuller's "Gospel its own Witness," part II. chapters 4th and 5th; and "Essays," part III. pp. 195—251; the piece entitled Three Conversations on Imputation, Substitution, and Particular Redemption:—and a valuable Discourse on the Sacrifice of Christ, its nature, value, and efficacy, by Dr. John Pye Smith, of Homerton Academy.—The Author has lately derived much pleasure, and not a little profit, from the perusal also of an American publication —"Four Sermons on the Doctrine of the Atonement. By Nathan S. S. Beman, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Troy." He would not be understood as giving his sanction to every sentiment and mode of expression and illustration. But he conceives the piece to be distinguished by much clearness of argument, and force of language.

DISCOURSE VIII.

ON THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

"*Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God, in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*"

It is reasonable to expect, that those doctrines which form the leading articles of any system should be plainly stated in the book which professes to make that system known. Whether this be not the case with regard to the two great truths of the divinity and atonement of Christ, I now leave it with yourselves to judge. The latter, in connexion with the former, as I have more than once hinted before, I consider as forming the very substance of the gospel, and as revealed in the Bible with a plainness and frequency, which *ought* to supersede all controversy on the subject.

I would now further remark, that if it be a doctrine contained in the Bible, its truth is supported by all the evidence which proves the Bible to be a Divine revelation:—inasmuch as the whole mass of proof by which the inspiration, or Divine authority, of the Scriptures, is evinced, bears, in its full force, on each of the articles which these Scriptures contain.—This evidence, in the two great branches, the *external*, and the *internal*, into which it is usually divided, is prodigiously extensive and diversified. Of the *internal* evidence, the doctrine in question constitutes, in my judgment, a most

prominent and convincing article: so striking does its consistency appear with the *truth of things;*—with the real state of mankind, as evinced by universal experience;—and with the character, in all its various attributes, of that Divine Being, "with whom they have to do."—The reasonableness of the doctrine, in these views, I endeavoured to show in my last discourse, chiefly by an illustration of its true nature, in opposition to the various misconceptions and misrepresentations of its adversaries.

That this doctrine is of God, is established by another branch of evidence, which I propose to illustrate a little in the present discourse; I mean the evidence arising from the *effects*, —the *moral effects*, which, from its nature, it is fitted to produce, and to which the faith of it has in fact uniformly given birth. We naturally expect, that such effects as are worthy of God should arise from a doctrine which God has revealed. We can never believe that doctrine to be from Him, of which the manifest tendency is to confirm corruption, to disannul or to loosen the obligations to virtue, and to present encouragement to the commission of sin. As "he that committeth sin is of the devil," so must be the doctrine by which sin is promoted or tolerated. Could it be fairly proved that this is the case, either in *theory* or in *fact*, with regard to the doctrine of the atonement, this would, of itself, be sufficient reason for assigning it to the Father of lies, and for decidedly affirming, either that the Scriptures do not contain it, or that, if they do, they cannot contain a revelation from God.

In these Scriptures, the connexion between the faith of those truths which they reveal, and holiness of heart and of life, is uniformly represented as inseparable.—The *fact* of such connexion is declared to have been exemplified, in many remarkable cases of complete change of character, produced by the reception of the truth made known in the gospel.—

Those who before had been the slaves of sin, when they "obeyed from the heart the doctrine which was delivered to them," were "made free from sin, became servants to God, had their fruit unto holiness, and their end everlasting life."* —This change was frequently visible in persons of the very worst possible characters. Read the catalogue of crimes in the 9th and 10th verses of the chapter of which our text is the conclusion, and observe what is said in the 11th, respecting those who practised them. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.—Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.—And *such were some of you:*

* See Rom. vi. 17—22. I have followed our translation in the first of these verses,—"ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Yet it is rather a free translation of the words—ὑπηκουσατε δε εκ καρδιας εις ὁν παρεδοθητε τυπον διδαχης. These words have been rendered by Doddridge, M'Knight, and others—"ye have obeyed from the heart that *model* (Dod.) or *mould*, (M'Kn.) of doctrine into which ye were delivered." Locke, in his Paraphrase, unites the two figures of a *mould*, from which they received the impression or lineaments of their characters, and a *new master* to whose authority they had been transferred, and whom they had learned heartily to obey. But in his note he prefers the latter allusion:—"Εις ὁν παρεδοθητε unto which ye were "delivered:—No harsh, but an elegant expression, if we observe that St. "Paul here speaks of Sin and the Gospel as of two masters, and that those he "writes to were taken out of the hands of the one, and delivered over to the "other, which they having from their hearts obeyed, were no longer the slaves "of sin, he whom they obeyed being, by the rule of the foregoing verse, truly "their master." Wakefield adopts the same view of the figure:—"after being "slaves of sin, you are become obedient from the heart to a form of doctrine "unto which you were transferred; and have left the service of sin to become "slaves to righteousness."—The whole context would certainly lead us to prefer an allusion to the relation of master and servant, which is the figure that runs through the chapter, rather than that, however otherwise appropriate and beautiful, of the pouring of melted metal into a mould. And perhaps, in the word τυπος, there may be a reference to the *mark* by which the slaves of different masters were distinguished; and their being transferred from one *mark* to another may be a natural enough expression for their being transferred from one *master* to another.

but ye are *washed*, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are *justified*, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

What, then, was the doctrine which possessed this transforming influence?—of which the preaching and the reception produced effects so singular, and so excellent?—It was the doctrine of THE CROSS;—the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, "delivered up for the offences of the guilty, and raised again for their justification;" bearing their sins in his own body on the tree;" "suffering, the just for the unjust, that he might bring them to God."—The ambassadors of heaven proclaimed, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;"—that he had "made him who knew no sin to be sin for guilty men, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him:" and, on the ground of this declaration, they "prayed men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God."—The passage from which the text of last discourse was taken, contains a brief summary of the great doctrine of the cross, the doctrine which was declared to men with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. —"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely, by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the

* See also Eph. ii. 1—5, 10. 1 Thess. i. 2—10, with chap. ii. 13.

remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith; do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." *

Such was the doctrine which, accompanied with that Divine influence of which I am afterwards to speak, affected the hearts, subdued the wills, and changed the characters of men.—And, let me ask, is not the fact still the same? What is the doctrine *now*, that is the means of "turning the heathen from idols, to serve the living God?—What is the doctrine which is owned of God, by its mighty efficacy in converting men from a life of abandoned profligacy to one of piety and virtue?—or from irreligious worldly-mindedness, to holiness, and devotedness to God?—What is the doctrine that brings the sinner, convicted, subdued, and penitent, to his knees before the throne of grace?—that makes the exercises of devotion his *privilege*, as well as his duty,—and communion with heaven his chief joy?—that makes "the Sabbath a delight;"—the inspired volume "more precious to him than thousands of gold and silver;"—his heart habitually humble;—his conscience tender;—his life not merely "sober and righteous," but "*godly?*"—What, in a word, is the doctrine that "converts the soul?"—the doctrine by which a sinner, "dead in trespasses and sins," is "born again?"—Is it not

* Rom. iii. 19—31.

still the doctrine of a Divine, and divinely appointed Saviour, making atonement for sin by the blood of his cross? Is it not that very doctrine concerning himself, which Jesus taught Nicodemus, as the *means* of that regeneration, of which he had just before declared the indispensable *necessity*? "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."*

That such is the fact, the experience of many centuries has placed beyond all controversy. The *reason* of the fact—the fitness of the means for the production of the end,—it will be my object, in the subsequent part of this discourse, to show.

It is an undeniable and melancholy truth, that the doctrine of justification through the atonement of Christ *has been abused.* —But what is there, of all good things, that is beyond the reach of perversion and abuse, by "hearts deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?" Hypocrisy, it has been justly remarked, may be considered as itself a proof of the acknowledged excellence of religion. Men do not think of feigning what is not esteemed as good. And the very circumstance, that when men are desirous to pass for being very religious characters, and to cloak under the semblance of sanctity the indulgence of sin, the profession which they embrace is, not that of Socinian sentiments, but always of the contrary, may be accounted a tacit admission in favour of the latter; for that can never be assumed as a *cover for evil*, by any man possessing the subtlety requisite for being a successful

* John iii. 14—17.

hypocrite, of which the practical effects are not seen and known to be *generally good.*—"Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness," we learn from Jude, was a very early perversion of the gospel. And we need not, therefore, be surprised, if we still find men of the same description with those whom he mentions, and whose characters he pourtrays in such dark shades of colouring, men who "creep in unawares" into the church of Christ, "ungodly men," who by their subsequent conduct betray the base and impious hypocrisy of their profession, "denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction."*

This leads me further to observe, that, apart from the simplicity and plainness with which any doctrine is directly declared, we may often learn much of the real meaning of the writer, by considering the nature of those *objections*, which he either represents as having been started, or supposes may be started, against it.—This is a remark, for the application of which there is frequent occasion in the reasonings of the apostle Paul. An instance of it, connected with my present subject, occurs in the beginning of the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans:—"What shall we say, then?" says he; "*shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*" Now, had the doctrine of the apostle been, *that men are justified before God, and obtain eternal life, by their own obedience*, is it at all conceivable, that he should ever have imagined such an idea, in the form of an objection, to present itself to the mind of any one of his readers? Had *this* been his doctrine, such an objection would not only have been destitute of all real force; it would not have possessed the remotest semblance even of *plausibility*. In short, it could never have been made; for it could never have entered into the mind of man. The

* Jude, verse 4.

only doctrine that could possibly suggest such an objection, is the doctrine of salvation by "free grace, without the works of the law, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."—This, accordingly, is the doctrine, against which the same objection is still incessantly made;—ignorantly and falsely made, we contend; for it was refuted by Paul himself; and it has been ten thousand times brought, and as many times refuted since. But still the nature of the objection shows the nature of the doctrine;—and the precise sameness of this and other objections, *then* and *now*, strongly indicates the correspondence between what is usually termed evangelical doctrine, and the gospel which Paul was commissioned to preach.

It is not at all my design to enter at large, in this Discourse, into an illustration of the practical influence of the whole of that system of truths, of which those I have been endeavouring to defend form a part. I shall confine myself, at least in a great degree, to the doctrine of the atonement.

To this doctrine the text has immediate reference:—"*Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God, in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*"

One or two remarks shall suffice on the *language* of the text.

We "*glorify God in our body and in our spirit,*" when the powers of our bodies, the faculties of our minds, and the affections of our hearts, are all sacred to him; all regulated in their exercise, by a supreme regard to his authority as the rule, and to his glory as the end, of all our thoughts, words, and actions:—when our inward dispositions towards him correspond, in their nature, to the various lights in which his blessed character is presented to our contemplation:—when not only the duties which we owe directly to himself are faithfully and heartily fulfilled, but the duties which we owe to our fellow creatures, in the various connexions of life, are done

"as to the Lord, and not to men."—The expression may thus be considered as comprehending *the whole of practical religion;*—the whole extent and variety of duty, in its *inward principle* and its *external performance.*—And although the character I have thus drawn is far from being, especially in their own estimation of themselves, the perfect attainment of any of the children of God, yet complete conformity to it is, to every one of them, the subject of daily solicitude and prayers, and the object of habitual and vigilant endeavours.

"*Ye are bought with a price.*"—It is common to speak of the blessings of salvation as purchased by the death of Christ for his people; nor is there any heresy, or material error, in such modes of expression. In the New Testament, however, I think it is almost invariably the case, that when the idea of *purchase* is introduced, it is the purchase of *the persons themselves.* For *them* the price is paid. They are "the redeemed of the Lord;"—his "purchased possession;"—his peculiar property:—redeemed from the bondage of sin and satan, into "the glorious liberty of the children of God;" redeemed from death and hell, to the possession and hope of spiritual and eternal life. "*Ye* are not your own; for *ye* are bought with a price."—And what *is* the price? The apostle does not mention it. The Corinthians, he well knew, would be at no loss to understand to what he referred. And this circumstance shows, how accustomed they must have been to the use of language of this description in his preaching;—to the representation of the death of Christ as the price of the redemption of sinners,—"the RANSOM for many."—The following passages, amongst many others, are instances in proof of the justness of these remarks.—"Feed the church of God (or of the Lord) *which he hath purchased* with his own blood:"—"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as

ye know, that *ye were not redeemed* with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot:" —"Thou wast slain, and *hast redeemed us* to God by thy blood."*

If, under the government of a holy and righteous God, *sin is pardoned*, we may rest assured that this pardon must be bestowed in a way that shall hold out no encouragement to the continued commission of it:—that if provision is made for the restoration of rebels to favour, it must be connected with provision for their return, at the same time, to loyal subjection and obedience.—We are now to see whether the atonement of Christ does not happily unite these two essential objects;—whether this medium of restoration to the Divine favour, does not involve in its nature the most powerful considerations, at once to *deter from sin*, and to *excite to the practice of holiness.*

On this important and interesting subject, I shall endeavour, as on the former, to avoid, as much as possible, controversial discussion; from a conviction, that there are some points, and that this is one of them, with regard to which the most effectual refutation of error is the statement of truth.

I shall illustrate the practical influence of the doctrine of the atonement, as arising from the views which are given by it, of the *law of God*, the *evil of sin*, the *character of the Divine Being*, the *love of Christ*, the *relation into which it brings us to God*, and the *necessity of holiness.*

The field is very extensive. I fear I may need more of your patience than I feel myself entitled to require. But I shall endeavour to discuss the different particulars with as much brevity as possible.

* Acts xx. 28. 1 Peter i. 17—19. Rev. v. 9.

I. Let us, then, direct our attention, *in the first place*, to the light in which the doctrine of atonement places THE LAW OF GOD.

Of every government that is desirous to prevent transgression, and to ensure cheerful and prompt obedience, it ought to be a primary object, to inspire the minds of its subjects with *respect for the laws*. In proportion as these are perceived and felt to be good,—to be consonant with the principles of equity, and calculated to promote the prosperity and happiness of the community;—in proportion as there exists a conviction that they really are such as *ought* to be uniformly and unalterably enforced,—will be the likelihood of their commanding a general and ready submission. A law, or system of laws, that is either condemned for its excessive rigour, on the one hand, or, on the other, despised for its weakness, and instability, is not likely, in either case, to be obeyed with cordiality; nor, when transgression has been committed, is there much ground to expect, either very deep penitence in the criminal himself, or, in the community where the offence has been committed, any very strong concurring sentiment of condemnation.

To apply these remarks to the case before us.—Nothing can be more obvious, than that every system of doctrine which excludes the atonement of Christ as the ground of forgiveness, and makes the acceptance of men in the sight of God to depend on their own obedience as its procuring cause,—must, of necessity, proceed upon the principle that the divine law is, in some way or other, relaxed in its strictness, reduced and mitigated in its requirements, satisfied with a partial and imperfect obedience.—A law which requires us to "love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind," "and to love our neighbour as ourselves;"—which demands the universal and

unceasing operation of these principles, so that every thought, every feeling, every word, and every action, must be in perfect consonance with their pure unmingled exercise:—such a law, it is very manifest, can never suit any system of this description. Acceptance on the ground of such a law, is, with regard to every individual of the children of men, entirely and for ever out of the question. The principles of the law must be qualified, and its requisitions modified and abridged, in accommodation to that depravity of our nature, which, by the mistaken advocates of such systems, is misnamed *human frailty*: the same spirit that relaxes the strictness of the law, with mournful consistency palliating the corruption that is opposed to it.—We have been told, accordingly, that for God to punish every transgression of his law, committed by "*the frail and erring children of men*," would be to act the part of a "*merciless tyrant*."

Now, let me ask, are such views as these fitted to inspire becoming veneration, either for the law, or for the lawgiver? Does the admission of such suppositions, or the use of such language, indicate a mind under the predominant influence of such veneration?—Has the infinitely wise God, then, given a law to his creatures, by which he cannot abide, without incurring the charge of injustice and merciless cruelty?—Has that law—(summed up in the two great precepts before mentioned)—which was originally "holy, and just, and good," ceased to be so, in consequence of the *indisposition of men to obey it*?—I say their *indisposition*:—for *such*, in truth, is the *frailty* of which these writers speak;—such alone the nature of that *inability*, which they would plead as an apology for disobedience.

A law which admits of the violation of itself, is no law. It is a contradiction in terms;—a burlesque on legislation.—Are we to conceive of the supreme Lawgiver, after he has laid

before us his commandments, as addressing us thus:—"Such, "O ye children of men, are my laws;—but I do not, by any "means, require perfect obedience to them. And although I "do not specify the particular instances in which you may "transgress with impunity,—although I do not say how far "you may go in the violation of them, and escape vengeance:— "yet I will not, you may rest assured, 'my frail and erring "creatures,' be such a 'merciless tyrant' as to call you to a "strict account for every offence!"

This leads me immediately to another question, applicable to every view that can be taken of a relaxed and mitigated law:—What is *the extent* of this relaxation? *How far* is the law mitigated?—If this question cannot be *distinctly* answered, then are we left in total ignorance what the law is at all, by which our conduct is to be tried. There is no fixed standard. All is thrown loose. The inclination of each individual will, in every instance, with all the deceitful self-partiality which is natural to man, be its own interpreter of the law:—and as this inclination is, in every individual, in one direction or another, an inclination *to sin*, we can be at no loss to know to what side it will invariably lean.

It is very true, that there are cases, in which the threatenings of punishment annexed to human laws cannot, with propriety, be executed;—cases in which it is right that the penalty should be remitted. But this, it is obvious, is not an excellence in such laws. It arises from their imperfection; that imperfection which necessarily attaches to every thing human;—it being impossible for the laws of men to provide, with precision, for every supposable case.—But to imagine any portion of such imperfection to exist in the laws of God, would be utterly inconsistent with just conceptions of his omniscience and infinite wisdom.

In opposition to all such views,—unworthy views as I

conceive them to be,—of the law of God; but views, which, I repeat, are, in a greater or smaller degree, inseparable from every scheme of doctrine, that rejects the atonement, and places salvation on the ground of personal obedience:—in opposition to all such views as these, consider now the light in which the law of God is presented by the doctrine which I have been endeavouring to defend.

To me it has ever appeared one of the leading excellences and glories of the gospel, that, while it provides salvation for the guilty, it does this without the slightest infringement of the immutable perfection of that law which they have violated. *It* stands in all its original extent and purity:—unaltered, unalterable. The doctrine of salvation by grace, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," *proceeds upon the express assumption*, of the *absolute and unchangeable perfection of the law*. This is the very ground on which we plead for the necessity of that doctrine; the very foundation on which we consider it as resting. It proceeds on the assumption, that the law can, in no instance, be violated with impunity;—that the awful sentence which it has pronounced, "Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them," is as righteous as it is awful;—that instead of God's acting the part of a "merciless tyrant" in condemning and punishing every transgression, "he and his throne would have been guiltless," and the sinner would have had no just cause to complain of undue severity, had he inflicted this curse, in its full extent.—In this way, all is as it ought to be. God holds his proper place, and man his. The law condemns the sinner, and not the sinner the law. The transgressor is saved from death;—and yet the law which he has transgressed is, "magnified and made honourable:"—and the righteousness of the sentence by which he has been

condemned, is, even in the very act of forgiveness, recognised, illustrated, and ratified!

But I am forgetting, you will think, my promise of brevity. —Surely I need not now put the question to any candid and humble mind—"which of these views is most fitted to inspire our minds with *respect and reverence for the Divine Law?*" which is, consequently, most fitted to fill us with the dread of violating its holy requirements; and with self-condemnation, shame, and penitential sorrow, when we *have* transgressed? And which, therefore, bears, in these respects, the most favourable aspect on the great questions of moral obligation, and accountableness to God?

II. I must now proceed to the *second* particular, which is very closely connected with the first—namely, the view given, by the atonement, of THE EVIL OF SIN.

I have said that this particular is closely connected with the former. For "*sin is the transgression of the law;*" and our impressions of the evil of sin will necessarily be proportioned to our conviction of the immutable "holiness, justice, and goodness" of the law. This might, of itself, so far settle the point as to this second particular.—There are various other lights, however, still more clear, impressive, and convincing, in which the subject may be contemplated.

It is a common and favourite sentiment with our opponents, that the chief end of God, in creation and providence,—in the whole of his administration,—is, not, as we allege, *his own glory*, but *the diffusion of happiness amongst his creatures.* Were this sentiment just, it would seem to follow, that the former of these two objects is of inferior consequence to the latter; and that *on the supposition* of their coming, in any case, into competition, the glory of God should give way, and be

sacrificed to the happiness of his creatures.—But surely no man of sober, well-constituted mind, will seriously and deliberately affirm, that there can be any thing to which the glory of the Most High should be subordinate and subservient;—any thing to which it ought to yield. And if so, then that which is highest in importance (as every thing must be that has immediate reference to the great Supreme) must, of necessity, be first in contemplation, in every part of the Divine procedure.

The connexion of these remarks with our present subject is this.—The sentiment, that the happiness of the creature is the chief and ultimate end of the Divine administration, naturally leads to another;—that *the principal evil of sin arises from its effect in destroying that happiness*, or from its tendency to the production of this effect.—But this, you will at once perceive, is *low ground* to take on such a subject. *We* consider the evil of sin, as arising chiefly from the manner in which it affects the honour of the Supreme Jehovah. Sin is rebellion against the highest authority, opposition to infinite purity, ungrateful disregard of unbounded and unmerited goodness. It is the highest, the most contemptuous affront to the majesty of heaven. Its *tendency*, were it allowed its full operation, is, to overturn the throne of the Eternal. It aims at the annihilation of his government, of his glory, and of his very existence.—It is in such views of it as these, that we are accustomed to speak of it as *an infinite evil*; a phrase, by which we do not mean to assert that, in any strict philosophical sense, the actions of a creature can possess the property of infinitude; but simply that sin, as committed against an infinite Being, is an evil of incalculable demerit, and deserving of an endless punishment.

Let us now see, whether those views of the enormity of sin be not confirmed and sanctioned by God himself, in all their

extent, by that method which he has been pleased to adopt, to render the forgiveness of it consistent with the glory of his great name, and of his righteous government;—that is, *by the atonement of Jesus Christ.*

O what a view, my brethren, what an affecting, what an overwhelming view, is here given, of the demerit of sin, in the estimate of a just and holy God!—Has HE considered sin as standing in need of *such an expiation!*—not the mediation of a creature, even of the highest order, but the incarnation of a Divine person,—the sufferings and death of him, who, though "found in fashion as a man, thought it not robbery to be equal with God?" Can we conceive a declaration more impressive than this, that sin is "that abominable thing which he hates?"—no light, no trivial, no venial evil,—but indeed "exceeding sinful?"—In proportion as sin is lightly thought of, it will be readily committed. But oh! who, with Gethsemane and Calvary before his eyes, can ever think lightly of sin? Who that contemplates—not the bodily tortures merely,—not the scorn, and reproach, and "cruel mockings" only,—not all the sufferings, of every description, which it was in the power of men alone to inflict;—but those deep, mysterious, inward agonies, which must have oppressed the soul of "the man Christ Jesus," when it was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;"—when "his sweat was like great drops of blood falling down to the ground;" and when, on the cross, he cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—who, I say, that contemplates this amazing scene, in the full remembrance of what HE was who thus suffered, can ever think lightly of sin?—of sin, the accursed cause of all;—of sin, that infused into his cup of suffering all its bitter ingredients;—of sin, that sharpened, and barbed, and dipped,

those "arrows of the Almighty, the poison whereof drank up his spirit!"

Where there are low thoughts of sin, there will, of course, be low thoughts of its punishment:—doubts, possibly, whether, in some instances at least, it will be punished at all; and, at any rate, slight impressions of the nature and extent of the punishment which it shall incur.

I am not going to enter into any general proof of the inevitable certainty, and of the fearful nature, of future punishment.—But look at the cross. Here is evidence enough. Who can contemplate Calvary, in the light in which *we* view it, and retain a doubt, for a single moment, in his mind, whether it be the Divine determination to punish sin? That it cannot pass with impunity under his holy government, was written of old, on every altar, in the blood of every expiatory victim;—and it is now written on the cross, in the blood of the Son of God.—And while the atoning death of the Redeemer decides the *certainty* of future punishment; the same event is enough, surely, to make the heart of every one to "meditate terror," who goes on in his trespasses, and neglects the great salvation. It could not be to deliver from any slight or temporary punishment, that all this scene of wonders was acted;—that God appeared on earth "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and, in the nature which he had assumed into personal union with his own, "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." There would, on this supposition, be no reasonable proportion between the end and the means of its attainment;—between the evil from which deliverance was to be effected, and the price at which this deliverance has been obtained.—It is a remarkable fact, that the strongest language in the Bible respecting future punishment, is the language used by the gentle and compassionate Saviour. *He*

speaks of "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;" of "outer darkness;" of "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never shall be quenched." From this fearful doom, thus expressed by himself, he came to save the guilty children of men; and the wonderful means by which he effected this salvation, harmonize with, and solemnly confirm, the energy of his expressions. In *this* respect, as well as in many others, it is indeed, "*a great salvation.*"

I again leave it with yourselves to judge, whether the views now given of the atonement of Christ, or the views of those who, affirming the sufficiency of the mere repentance of the sinner, apart from any other consideration, to obtain his forgiveness, deny that any atonement was requisite, and that any has been made;—whether the one or the other of these opposite views be most calculated to impress the mind with a proper sense of the demerit of sin, and, as a practical consequence, to deter and restrain from the commission of it.

The views of sin, of human nature, and of the state and prospects of man, which are exhibited so impressively by the doctrine of atonement, are, it is true, deeply humbling. And there is reason to believe, that their mortifying tendency is one great cause of their rejection; I do not mean by Unitarians only, but by multitudes besides. It is a part, and no small part, of "the offence of the cross."—And yet, to enlightened reason, their humbling nature ought to be one of their chief recommendations. It is right, surely, that *every* creature should be humble before God: and it is peculiarly reasonable that a *sinful* and *guilty* creature should be thus humble. There is no pride, indeed, to be found in the universe, except in the breasts of fallen creatures;—that is, where of all places it ought least to be found. There is pride on earth. There is pride in hell. There is no pride in heaven. It was pride, in the form of ambition, that originally

seduced man from his allegiance to God. Pride was thus the first principle of transgression: and it is pride, in all its variety of kinds, that still maintains and cherishes the spirit of rebellion.—Surely, then, it can never be deemed right, that the means by which man is restored to the favour of God, and blessed with pardon and life, should be of such a nature as to gratify and foster the very principle that seduced him, and that keeps him astray! No. This pride must be subdued. This spirit of elation, of self-dependence, and self-sufficiency, must be broken. "The lofty looks of man must be humbled, and the haughtiness of man must be bowed down and the Lord alone must be exalted." The mind that does not instantly perceive, and feel, the *propriety* of this, must be, to a melancholy degree, under the perverting influence of the very principle in question;—a principle, whose dominion in the soul it is the first effect of the gospel to overthrow.—In the New Testament, accordingly, *humility* is represented as one of the first and most essential qualities in the character of the true disciple of Jesus: and experience has universally taught, that every other Christian virtue will flourish in the same proportion in which it prevails. The graces of the Christian life cannot thrive in the same soil with pride. It is one of those weeds, of rank lukuriance, which "choke the word, and render it unfruitful."—And while humility in general is thus essential, the first sentiment, I would observe, of genuine Christian humility, is, *an abasing sense of guilt and of utter unworthiness in the sight of God*;—the sentiment of the publican, when, "standing afar off, he would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner!"—This sentiment is learned, this feeling inspired, at the foot of the cross. It is here that the sinner first knows himself;—here that his heart is broken;—here that he is emptied of high-minded self-

complacency;—here that his *whole character* receives the impression of the lowliness and meekness of Christ. For the humility which here takes possession of his soul, is not so properly a separate and independent virtue, as a general state of heart, that diffuses its benign influence through all the character;—not a distinct feature of the countenance, but that which imparts to all the features their combined expression of loveliness;—not a particular object in the landscape, but the mild and mellow evening-light, which pervades, and softens, and beautifies the whole.

III. I must now proceed, *in the third place*, to consider the practical influence of those views which are presented by the atonement, of THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

I had occasion to observe, in last discourse, that "such a "view of the Divine Being is presented in the Cross as is "precisely calculated to inspire and to maintain (to maintain, "too, with a power which will increase in influence, the more "closely and seriously the view is contemplated) the two great "principles of a holy life, the *love* and the *fear* of God; filial "attachment, freedom, and confidence, combined with humble "reverence, and holy dread."—I shall, at present, illustrate a little further this general sentiment.

These two sacred principles are to be considered as mutually partaking of each other:—*affectionate fear*,—*reverential love*. —This happy union is produced by a believing view of the combined perfections of God;—just such a view as is exhibited in the atonement, where, as we have seen, "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other;" —where God appears in all the majesty of offended holiness and inflexible justice, and, at the same time, "delighting in mercy." The two characters, "GOD IS LIGHT," and "GOD IS LOVE," are alike illustrated by the atonement of Jesus:—

the latter inspiring us with joyful confidence, and the former with holy awe; the latter encouraging us to draw nigh, while the former makes us still to feel our infinite distance;—so that, while we approach with boldness to the *throne of grace*, we are not allowed to forget that it is the *throne of holiness.*

We have been often represented, when we speak of God as requiring satisfaction to his justice in order to the exercise of his mercy, as exhibiting him in the character of a gloomy and vindictive tyrant.—The views laid before you, in last Discourse, of the nature and proper design of the atonement, may suffice to convince you of the entire falsehood of such representations of our sentiments.—I have now, however, to add, as a circumstance peculiarly worthy of notice, that, while our opponents reprobate the doctrine of atonement, in terms of indignant severity, as being an unworthy libel on the infinite goodness of the Divine Nature, this very doctrine is held forth in the Scriptures, as the most interesting and impressive manifestation of that goodness;—as the grand evidence of that most blessed truth, that "*God is love.*"—"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Herein was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins:"—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life:"—"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

* 1 John iv. 8—10. John iii. 16. Rom. v. 6—8.

This, I say, is a remarkable circumstance.—We learn the existence and the degree of God's love from what it has done. The general goodness of the universal Parent, is strikingly discernible in creation and providence:—"his tender mercies are over all his works." These displays of his goodness are far from being overlooked, in the Scriptures, as reasons for the gratitude of his intelligent creatures. But the gift of his Son, to die for sinners, is still represented as his chief mercy;—his "unspeakable gift;"—a display of his love by which all the other manifestations of it are thrown into eclipse. It has been eloquently and justly denominated, "the noon-tide of everlasting love, the meridian splendour of eternal mercy."

This display of the love of God,—of the freedom and the riches of his mercy, is pressed upon the attention of the disciples of Jesus, as furnishing the great motive to practical godliness. The text feelingly appeals to it. And the apostle takes his stand on the same ground, when he says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service;—and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God:"—and so does the apostle Peter, in a passage of his first epistle formerly quoted: "—pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

It is not the value of the blessings of salvation themselves only (unspeakably precious though they be) that constitutes the most affecting display of the love of God:—it is the

* Rom. xii. 1, 2. 1 Peter i. 17, 18.

wonderful medium through which these blessings are bestowed. It is not merely that "God hath given to us eternal life," but that "this life is in his Son:"—it is not "*redemption*" only, but "redemption *through his blood*," that manifests the "riches" of Divine "grace." That *such* a Mediator should be appointed! —that *such* an expiation should be made! It is *here*, that we "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." It is *this*, above every thing else, that binds and attaches the heart in grateful love. The motive comes home to the bosom of every child of God, with melting and mighty persuasion:—

> "O what a scale of miracles is here!
> Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
> Through means which speak its value infinite!
> A pardon bought with blood! with blood Divine!
> With blood Divine of him I made my foe!
> Persisted to provoke—tho' aw'd and woo'd,
> Bless'd and chastised, a flagrant rebel still!
> A rebel, 'midst the thunders of his throne!
> Nor I alone:—a rebel universe!
> My species up in arms! not one exempt!
> Yet for the foulest of the foul he dies!"

The means by which we are brought to the possession of the blessings of salvation stamp a value on these blessings themselves.—And who, let me now ask, will feel the obligation of gratitude for these blessings most powerfully?—Certainly, *in the first place*, the man who accounts himself *most unworthy of them*. He who fancies that he has the ground of his acceptance and salvation *in himself*, can never feel the same measure of grateful love, as he does, who, viewing himself as a *lost* creature, utterly helpless and hopeless, looks for eternal life as "the *gift of God* through Jesus Christ our Lord,"—bestowed "not for works of

righteousness which he hath done, but according to God's mercy;" who feels and acknowledges himself "a debtor to mercy alone,"—to free, unconditional mercy.—A sense of unworthiness, and a sense of obligation, must always be commensurate with each other. Unless we are sensible that God would be just in condemning us, we cannot be thankful for his pardoning us. The criminal who is not satisfied that he deserves to die, will feel but a slight measure of obligation to him who grants him his life.—*In the second place*, he will be most thankful, who has on his mind the strongest impression of *the difficulties that lay in the way of his salvation.* Such, for example, as these:—the *enormity of sin*;—how is it possible that the God of infinite purity can pass it by?—the *claims of justice*;—how can these be made consistent with the pleadings of mercy?—the *demands of truth*;—how can God fulfil his threatenings against sin, and yet the sinner escape?—the *good of the creation*;—how shall guilty creatures be pardoned,—how shall rebels be restored to favour, and to the privileges of loyal subjects, and yet no encouragement be given to sin,—no temptation be held out to rebellion?—He who perceives these difficulties in their true nature and magnitude, and who sees how the infinite wisdom of God has combined with his infinite goodness effectually to solve them by the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ, must surely feel a degree of gratitude, such as can never be experienced by him who reckons the whole scheme a useless encumbrance.—If *grateful love*, then, be a motive to cheerful and active obedience, judge ye where the power of this moral spring is likely to be strongest, and most efficient.—Jesus Christ has himself decided this point. "Simon," said he, in answer to the injurious surmises of the Pharisee, in whose house he received the expressions of affectionate penitence from the woman who had been a sinner—"Simon, I have

somewhat to say unto thee. And he said, Master, say on. —A certain creditor had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house,—thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."*—That doctrine, then, which presents the most impressive and heart-abasing view of the evil nature of our sins, of their number and aggravations, and of the riches of Divine grace in their forgiveness, must, on the principle which is thus laid down, be the doctrine that is most of all fitted to inspire the heart with the fervour of grateful love to the God of salvation.

But all this, some may be disposed to say, is *selfish*.—No, my friends. The love to God, of which I now speak, is, indeed, *associated*, in its exercise, with the exercise of *self-love*. And how *can* it be otherwise? Self-love is an essential principle in the constitution of our nature:—and we are nowhere taught, in the Scriptures, to cultivate love to God, as if it were the love of *mere abstract excellence*; but as the love of a Being who bears a relation,—the highest, the most sacred,

* Luke vii. 40—47.

the most interesting of all relations, *to ourselves;* a relation, pregnant with the most important results, either of evil or of good.—"We love him, because he first loved us."—His love to us, however, is love *in union with holiness;* and complacent delight in this holiness is implied in that love with which we return it. While we love him *for what he hath done,* we love him also *for what he is.*—We love him for *his whole character.*

This love, it should be again recollected, is associated, inseparably, with "godly fear."—From a natural wish to find the character of God as favourable as possible to ourselves, we are in danger of lending a ready ear to the representations of those who speak of him as *all mercy—all compassion*; and of overlooking certain other views of his character which are also given in the Scriptures. Not that *too much* is said, or can be said, of his mercy and compassion; for no terms in human language can exceed, or can even express, that which is *infinite:*—but that *too little* is said of such of his perfections as are of an awful and alarming nature.—"God is jealous, and Jehovah revengeth: Jehovah revengeth and is furious: Jehovah will take vengeance on his enemies; and he reserveth wrath for his adversaries.—Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?"—"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men:"—"Even our God is a consuming fire."*—"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."†

* Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν πῦρ καταναλίσκον.—In our translation, the καὶ is entirely left out: "For our God is a consuming fire:"—and many people seem afraid to quote the words, except in the form of a paraphrase—"a God out of Christ is a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity." This is a truth; but not the truth the apostle intended to express. The meaning seems to be, that the God

† Nahum i. 2, 6. Rom. i. 18. Heb. xii. 29. x. 31.

What do such expressions mean?—That the infinite God is agitated by the emotions of turbulent passion? No. But they certainly express,—they express strongly,—they express in the only way, perhaps, in which the solemn truth could have been impressed on our minds, *the judicial displeasure* of God against sin:—and the design of them all is to deepen in our hearts the reverential fear of "THAT GLORIOUS AND FEARFUL NAME, THE LORD OUR GOD."*—The admonition implied in them all is, "Fear not them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear him."†

Now the meaning, the awful meaning of *all* such expressions, is, as it were, concentrated in the cross of Christ. They were all repeated, in their full emphasis, by the voice of God himself, when Jesus "bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." For never was there so alarming a display made of God's abhorrence of sin, and of his avenging jealousy of his glory.—But, let us not forget the point to which all these observations tend. The display of holy indignation was made by *the God of love*:—and the display of love, equally conspicuous in the same event, was made by *the God of holiness*. And by the contemplation of this union of holiness and grace,—of wrath against sin, and mercy to the sinner,—there is produced, in our hearts, a corresponding union of

of the gospel is the same with the God of the law:—that his character has undergone no change; that he is *still*, as of old, a "consuming fire, even a jealous God;" that his mercy in the gospel is in perfect consistency with his avenging jealousy of his glory:—and that, therefore, while we serve him "*acceptably*" through Christ, we must, at the same time, serve him "*with reverence and godly fear*:"—"for *even* our God," (such seems to be the effect of the καὶ) "is a consuming fire."

* Deut. xxviii. 58. † Luke xii. 4, 5.

fear and *love*;—a union of principles, which constitutes the foundation of all that is excellent in Christian character. In the whole conduct of the servant of Christ, in all its departments, the influence of this union appears.—In his approaches to the throne of grace, fear produces an humble reverence of address, while love dictates the ardent expressions of filial confidence and delight:—in the general course of his obedience, fear makes him jealous of himself, with a trembling diffidence and caution; while love makes his heart and his countenance cheerful, his feet swift, and his hands active and vigorous, in the service of his Master:—his sorrow for sin is at once the solemn dread of Divine displeasure, and the meltings of love to an offended Father; the view of the cross, as a display of wrath and of mercy, inspiring both the one and the other:—fear makes him shun all that is displeasing to God; love incites him to pursue all that he approves:—in affliction, fear fills him with self-suspicion, and leads him to self-examination; yet, while he trembles at the rod, and is full of heaviness, love inspires complacent and cheerful resignation to the wise and gracious appointments, as he believes them to be, of his heavenly Father:—in prosperity, fear shuns, with anxious apprehension, the abuse of the bounties of heaven; and love, with a full and glowing heart, devotes all to the glory of the Giver:—throughout life, fear guides, and love animates him:—in death, fear makes him serious, and love triumphant.

IV. Let me now direct your attention to another principle of Christian obedience, to which there is frequent reference in the New Testament,—I mean, LOVE TO CHRIST;—and consider, for a little, the influence of the doctrine I have been endeavouring to defend, in producing and maintaining it.

That this love is an essential part of the Christian character,

is evident, as I had occasion to mention in the second of these Discourses, from such passages of Scripture as these:—"He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me:"—"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:"—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha."*—That it is one of the main springs of a holy life, is also clear from the language both of Christ and his apostles; and, I might add, from the experience of all his true disciples:—"If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. If a man love me, he will keep my words:—he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings:"—"The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again."†

On this subject, my brethren, we have been insidiously represented, as putting love to Christ in the room, as it were, of love to God; as withholding from the Father, in proportion as we give to the Son; nay as even confining our gratitude to the Son, as one who has interposed to save us from the vindictive fury of the Father,—to whom, therefore it is more than insinuated, we can have no great measure of good-will.‡

* Matth. x. 37. Eph. vi. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

† John xiv. 15, 21—24. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

‡ "The Father and the Son are commonly represented as distinct beings, of different, and even opposite characters; the Father, stern, severe, and inflexible; the Son all gentleness and compassion; submitting to bear his Father's wrath, and to appease his anger, by substituting himself in the stead of the sinner. It is impossible to regard these two characters with equal affection; and the love of the imaginary Christ robs the living and true God of his honour and homage." Belsham's Review of Wilberforce, pp. 126, 127.—"——the imaginary person to whom they ascribe the attributes of Divinity, and who is, to such a degree,

—After having said so much on the character of God in last Discourse, and on love to God in this, I need hardly, I presume, assert the groundlessness and falsehood of such a charge. I may, however, appeal to experience. Is it, then, indeed so, ye lovers, of the Lord Jesus? Is it, indeed so, in your experience, that your love to the Father diminishes as your love to the Son increases?—Do you not rather find, that in the affections of your hearts, as well as in their divine essence, "Christ and the Father are one?"—that love to the one keeps pace with love to the other? Are you not disposed to say, with the very same fervour of grateful affection,—"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"—"blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because he hath visited and redeemed his people!" and—"To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father,—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!"—Is it not the delight of your hearts to combine the praises of both—"Salvation unto our God that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!"

"Glory be to Him who gave us,
Freely gave his Son to save us;
Glory to the Son who came!"

It requires but the glance of a moment, to discern the

the rival of the true and living God in their affections." Ibid. p. 128.—"I must also observe, that, as the God of this system is a Being of such stern severity, and, indeed, malignity, it is natural for those who receive it, willingly to imagine the existence of a second person, who, being invested with all the amiable attributes of Deity, and having also voluntarily submitted, in an incarnate form, to bear the wrath of God for the benefit of believers, becomes really the object of religious complacency, gratitude, and confidence, and occupies that place in the mind which properly belongs to the one living and true God." Ibid. p. 167.—*The* gross injustice and falsehood of such representations, will be perceived at once, by every candid and attentive reader of this and the preceding Discourse; and will be *felt* by every one who has "tasted that the Lord is gracious."

difference between the systems here. The obligation, in the one case, is less than nothing, when compared with that in the other. In the one case, we have a *fellow-creature*, a *fellow-man*, a *prophet*, commissioned of God to declare to us his truth and his will; to confirm, by miracles, the certainty of a future state; to show us, by his precepts, the paths of virtue; to set before us an example of obedience; to seal his testimony by his death; and by his own resurrection to assure us of the future resurrection of mankind from the grave.—In the other case, (for I cannot use more appropriate language than that of the apostle, although it has already been more than once referred to) we have Him "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,"—(or "to be *as* God;" not, however, in the way of mere *resemblance*, but of *equality*,—"to be *on an equality* with God,")*—yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

"Who, being in the form of God," say our Unitarian opponents, "thought it not *a prey* to be *as God;*" that is,—"*Being in the form of God,*" by the communication of Divine power and wisdom, "did not *eagerly grasp at the resemblance to God:*"—which seems to amount to no more than this; that, *possessing resemblance to God, he did not eagerly grasp at that which he already possessed!*—but, apart from all criticism, (for the passage would require more minute verbal discussion than befits this place)—apart, I say, from all criticism, and without going farther into the passage than this first clause; I would seriously ask those who thus interpret it, if they

* See Note Q.

really think it *possible* that this can be its true meaning?—Is it, then, to be the peculiar subject of our admiration and astonishment,—is it held up to us as the example which, of all examples, we are most sedulously to imitate,—that a creature, a man, possessing, by Divine communication, a singular portion of miraculous power and wisdom, did not pervert these high endowments to his own selfish ends!—that he was not guilty of the most heaven-daring presumption and impiety!—that he absolutely did not so abuse the gifts bestowed upon him, as to enter into a kind of competition for glory with that Supreme Being from whom he derived his wisdom and his power!—*Is* this, I ask,—*can* this *be*—the singular virtue, which we are called to admire and to imitate, as the brightest model of excellence that ever was exhibited on earth?—And, what is more immediately to our present purpose, where, according to this interpretation, is the amazing condescension and benevolence of the Saviour? Is *this* "the height and depth, and breadth and length, of the love of Christ, which *passeth knowledge?*"—Is there in *this* any thing so incomprehensible,—so utterly beyond the grasp of the most capacious mind?—The unnatural and vapid tameness of such an exposition is, of itself, sufficient to condemn it. It unnerves and paralyzes the whole strength of the passage. It evaporates all its spirit, and freezes every syllable of it to very ice.

But when, on the contrary, we consider Jesus as *God in our nature;* well may his love constrain us to "live not to ourselves, but to him who died for us and rose again."—In himself he is infinitely amiable; and therefore worthy of being supremely loved for *what he is.*—And oh! how shall we estimate,—how shall we feel,—how shall we express, the extent of our obligation to him? Whether we consider *his* disinterestedness, *our* unworthiness, the value of the

blessings bestowed, or the expense at which they are procured;—we find, in every view, abundant matter for songs of adoring praise. Here is, indeed, a "length and breadth, a depth and height, passing all knowledge;"—nor shall we ever, while in this world, have any adequate conception of the nature and extent of our obligations to this love. We shall not fully comprehend it, till we shall read the lesson in the light of heaven;—till we come to know, by immediate possession, the joys of eternity.—To the blessed hope of these immortal joys, it is HE that hath brought us. He hath redeemed us from despair;—from the "fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation:"—he hath "bought us with a price." Let "the life, then, which we now live in the flesh, be regulated by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us."*—Yes;—gave HIMSELF for us!" And for what end? "That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and *purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"†—*Let* us, then, my Christian brethren, *be* thus "zealous of good works." Never let us oppose the purpose of such infinite love. As we "name the name of Christ," let us "depart from all iniquity."‡ Under the constant impression of his remembered love, let his affecting and authoritative expostulation touch our hearts, and permanently influence our whole conduct—"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"§—Let us exemplify the power of that sacred impulse which is given to all the affections of the soul,—to all the inward springs of action, by this one great principle of love to the Divine Redeemer.

> "Talk they of morals?—O thou bleeding Love,
> The grand morality is love of thee!"

* Gal. ii. 20. † Titus ii. 14. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 19. § Luke vi. 46.

V. and VI. The two remaining particulars I shall illustrate together, because they are very closely connected with each other:—the RELATION INTO WHICH THE ATONEMENT BRINGS US TO GOD; and the view which it presents of the NECESSITY OF HOLINESS.

We belong to God *as creatures;*—creation necessarily implying an indisputable right of property, on the part of the Creator, in the creatures of his hand, as well as a claim for their services, and for the devotion to himself of all they are, and all they have.—But the text refers to a different ground of property,—to a different claim on God's part, and obligation, thence arising, on ours. It represents us as his *by purchase:*—"Ye are not your own; for ye are *bought with a price; therefore* glorify God, in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Through the blood of Christ, as the price of our redemption, and through faith in the atonement made by that blood, we become the property of God; his peculiar people; his purchased possession.—The design of the blessed God in bringing us into this relation to himself, ought never to be overlooked or forgotten:—"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people—(a people acquired by purchase, as a peculiar property)*—*that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*"†—I have already insisted on the obligation of *gratitude* which this implies. But there is also, what may, without impropriety, be termed the *obligation of consistency.* We become *his;*—his in body and in spirit;—in every member and power of the one, and in every faculty and capacity of the other. We feel ourselves his:—and we ask, "How ought they to live who are thus his?" The text

* λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν. † 1 Pet. ii. 9.

answers the question:—and the general idea of consistency is marked, in a variety of points of view, in the apostolic writings.—"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves, to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God:"—"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men:"—"We exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father doth his children), that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his kingdom and glory:"—"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called:"—"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord:"—"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch, and be sober:"—"If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth."*—In these and similar ways, do the inspired writers exhibit to the disciples their various relations, to God, to Christ, and to the future world, and urge them, by what I have termed the

* Rom. vi. 11—13. 1 Cor. vii. 23. 1 Thess. ii. 12. Eph. iv. 1. v. 8. 1 Thess. v. 5, 6. Col. iii. 1—5.

obligation of consistency, to a corresponding course of behaviour.

The NECESSITY OF HOLINESS most strikingly appears, when we consider the character of that Being, whose we become through the atoning blood of Jesus. We are the purchased people, the property, the servants, the children, of the HOLY GOD.—"This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."*—In the following passage, these two descriptions of obligation,—the obligation of consistency, and the obligation of gratitude, are most impressively combined:—"Wherefore, gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot."†

Besides:—we cannot for a single moment imagine the possibility of God's appointing an atonement, to save sinners

* 1 John i. 5—7. † 1 Peter i. 13—19.

from the guilt of sin, and from its punishment, and not, at the same time, to save them from sin itself. If it was the design of God, by means of the atonement, to bring sinners to *happiness*, it *must* have been his design to bring them to *holiness*. For he could not make them happy, without making them holy. If we can form any distinct idea at all of what philosophers mean by the *eternal fitness of things*, we surely see such fitness, in the establishment of an inseparable connexion between holiness and happiness, and between sin and misery.—The designs of God are all worthy of himself. Two things were lost by the fall of man;—the Divine *favour*, and the Divine *image*. It is the purpose of God, by the gospel, *to restore both*. It never was, and never could be his intention, to bring the guilty back to his *favour*, by means of an atonement, and to leave them destitute of his *moral likeness*. No. The restoration of the latter is as immediately the object of the Divine Being, in the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the restoration of the former. Let no one, therefore, imagine, that he *can* possess an interest in the Divine favour, through the atonement, while he is not renewed after the Divine image. The two go uniformly together. The latter is, as really as the former, *a part of our salvation*.—This shows, in the strongest light, the necessity of holiness. For if we continue unrenewed in the spirit of our minds, one part of the Divine purpose, in the atonement of Christ, is not accomplished in us; and without it, we have not only no good ground to believe that the other is, but the best reason to believe that it is not, and that "the wrath of God still abideth on us."

The atonement of Christ was intended to express, and did most affectingly express, the Divine abhorrence of sin:—could it possibly be, at the same time, intended as the publication of an act of indulgence? It was designed to "magnify the

law, and make it honourable:" could it be designed, at the same time, to "make it void?"—to annihilate, or to relax, its obligation? No, my brethren. We are "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." We do not, indeed, trust to the law, as the ground of our acceptance with God. For, conscious as we are that we have broken the law, —*many* parts of it *in practice*, and *every* part of it in its great general *principle* of supreme and perfect love to God; and convinced that a broken law condemns, and can never justify us;—we have gladly betaken ourselves to that "grace," which "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." But while, renouncing all self-dependence, we acknowledge ourselves "accepted *in the Beloved*," it is still our desire to make the law of God the rule of our duty; to have the affections of our hearts, the words of our lips, and the actions of our lives, increasingly conformed to its holy dictates. We are well aware, that otherwise than by such conformity, we cannot fulfil the injunction of the text, to "glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are God's." And we know also, that we can have no satisfactory evidence that we are of those who are "*in Christ Jesus*," and "*to whom there is no condemnation*," unless we "*walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*."*

I have thus, very imperfectly, set before you some of those considerations, which serve to vindicate, and to establish, the practical influence of the doctrine of salvation through the atonement of Christ.—In preaching this doctrine, with its collateral truths, we feel no sort of apprehension with regard to the consequences. We are sure that if any sinner embrace the doctrine in good earnest, he will instantly perceive the reasonableness, and feel the force, of the obligation

* Rom. viii. 1.

stated in the text. He will begin a new life. He will "walk with God." He will "live to him who died for him, and rose again."—So uniform and invariable is this consequence, in every instance in which the gospel is received in the love of it, that no man, according to the Scriptures, is to be accounted a believer of its doctrines, whom "the grace of God which bringeth salvation" hath not "taught to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."—The man who "names the name of Christ," while he does not "depart from iniquity;" who professes to confide in his grace, and in his atoning sacrifice, while he obeys not his will, but "walks according to the course of this world,"—must be either a self-deceiver, or a hypocrite; either imposing on others by a false profession, or a melancholy victim of the deceitfulness of his own heart.

When we say that, in preaching the doctrine of "justification by free grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," we preach a doctrine that is *consistent* with the interests of practical godliness, we occupy ground that is by far too low; as if we had done enough when we have merely shown that the two are *compatible*. We must go farther than this. The Scriptures represent the faith of this doctrine, as the great and only principle from which true practical godliness can arise;—the only soil in which the genuine fruits of righteousness can grow;—the only basis on which the beautiful superstructure of a holy life can be effectually reared.—The apostle Paul enjoins on Titus, that he should incessantly inculcate the doctrines of grace, not merely because in so doing there was *no danger* to the interests of morality, but as the only efficacious means of maintaining and promoting the practice of true morality amongst the followers of Christ:—"After that the kindness, and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by

works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and *these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that* they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.*"†

Of what unspeakable consequence is it, my brethren in Christ, to the honour of your God and Redeemer, to your own happiness, and to the spiritual and eternal interests of your fellow-sinners, that you study to maintain a consistent course of conduct,—"adorning the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things,"—"giving no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully!"—You are aware of the foul aspersion that has been thrown on evangelical doctrine, as if its tendency was to hold out encouragement to sinful indulgence. Let your conduct, I beseech you, give this aspersion the lie. Live it down. Show to all around you that it is a calumny; the offspring of malignant hostility to the gospel, and to that holiness which the faith of it invariably produces. If men *will* "speak evil of you," O let it be "falsely." In the midst of *such* reproach, you will enjoy what is infinitely more than a counterbalance to it, the

* "ΙΝΑ—*in order that—to the end that* they who have believed in God, &c.—"These things," adds the apostle,—viz. the things which he had just enjoined him to affirm constantly—"these things are good and profitable"—or "these are the things that are good and profitable unto men;"—ταῦτά ἐστι τὰ καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. They were good and profitable *on account* of their practical tendency and effects. And these *good* and *profitable* doctrines he immediately contrasts with those things on which a particular description of teachers were accustomed to insist, but of which the nature and tendency were widely different;—"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions about the law; for they are *un*profitable and *vain*."

† Titus iii. 4—8.

blessing of your Divine Master:—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely*, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven!" —"Put to silence, by well-doing, the ignorance of foolish men:" and, pitying the delusion of heart which dictates their groundless reflections against your religious principles, strive to gain them to Christ, by exhibiting, in connexion with your Christian profession, all the amiable virtues of the Christian life.—"Giving all diligence, add to your faith fortitude, and to fortitude knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be idle, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

And O! let mere nominal Christians be alarmed. *You* are the chief cause of this foul and false aspersion cast on the gospel of Christ. You, who "have a *form* of godliness, but deny its *power*:—you, who bear the *name* of Christ, but do not bear his *image*:—you, who make his atonement an article of your professed creed, but remain unsanctified by the truth which you profess to believe:—you, who seek to serve God and mammon; to unite the love of the world

* 2 Peter i. 5—11.

with the love of Christ:—you, who are satisfied with being members of a Christian community, with having been baptized in your infancy, (or, perhaps, in your adult years) with an external attendance on the ordinances of God, with getting the appellation of Christians from your neighbours, and, it may be, from your ministers,—while the world, after all, has your hearts:—*You* are the chief cause of this false reproach. I mean not to rail at you:—I would rather most affectionately warn you. Of what avail, permit me to ask you, is the *profession* of faith in Christ, without the *reality*? Will it soothe and satisfy an accusing conscience? Will it comfort you in trouble? Will it support you in death? Will it sustain and acquit you in judgment?—Let me entreat you, as you value your eternal interests, to be *in earnest* about religion. The salvation of your souls, if it be worth any thing, is worth every thing. And without it, indeed, every thing else is worth nothing. Give up, then, your attempts at compromise between God and the world;—and be decided. Halt not between two opinions. *Appear* on the side of God. *Be known* as the disciples of Christ. Remember what he hath said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."*

Then might we say to you,—for then you would feel the

* Luke ix. 23—26.

meaning of the words,—(and O that *all* present so felt their lost condition as sinners, and so felt their obligations to the only Saviour, and to the mercy of God in him, that *to all* we might address them!)—"YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD, IN YOUR BODY, AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD'S.

DISCOURSE IX.

ON THE CONNEXION OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST WITH HIS ATONEMENT.

Heb. x. 4.

"For it was not possible, that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.

After the full discussion of the doctrine of the atonement in a former discourse, I feel myself warranted in affirming, that to deny the expiatory nature of the death of Christ is to divest a large portion of apostolic language of its meaning, of apostolic illustration of its appropriateness, and of apostolic reasoning of its legitimacy and conclusive force; and that to disconnect the idea of propitiation from the statements of the New Testament writers, especially when they represent the death of Christ as having fulfilled the typical and prophetic import of the sacrifices before and under the law, requires a process of torturing criticism, and of loose and lawless interpretation, before which no language, however explicit, no illustrations, however appropriate, and no reasonings, however legitimate and forcible, could possibly stand.—The context alone, indeed, presents a sufficient ground for such affirmations. The apostle speaks of the law as "a shadow of good things to come." He shows that its sacrificial offerings were, by the very frequency and constancy of their repetition, proved to be inefficacious for the taking away of sin,—possessed of no virtue for obtaining the pardon and acceptance of guilty

creatures, and their reconciliation to God. He introduces the sacrifice of Christ, as having fulfilled their meaning and set them all aside,—as having effectually answered the end to which they were neither appointed nor competent,—as the substance of which they were the previous shadows, the glorious and efficient reality, of which they were the instituted prefigurations.—Read the whole passage, and try if, in honest candour, you can resist the conclusion, that the death of Christ was a true and proper sacrifice for sin:—"For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect: for then, would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Above, when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; (which are offered by the law;) then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."—To confirm the sacrificial nature and design of Christ's death, as expressed in these verses, you may connect them with expressions of the same import in the immediately preceding context: chap. ix. 24—26. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made

with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; (for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world;) but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

In making the atonement, the divine Redeemer "offered up himself." He who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and who upholdeth all things by the word of his power, BY HIMSELF expiated our sins."* In considering, in last discourse, the practical influence of the doctrine of atonement, the connexion was assumed, of the Supreme Divinity of him who was at once the priest and the victim with the sufficiency and efficacy of his propitiation;—and you could not but be sensible, how very materially this connexion contributed to the energy and conclusiveness of those practical appeals which were founded upon the doctrine. This connexion, indeed, I cannot but regard as of very essential importance, in which light soever the purpose of atonement be contemplated,—whether as securing the honour of the divine righteousness in forgiving sin, or as furnishing, in the faith of it, the grand influential motive to the practice of holiness by the renewed sinner.

Now there are some divines, and Christian philosophers, who agree with us in asserting atonement as the doctrine of scripture,—who speak of the death of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, and of forgiveness and the other blessings of salvation being divinely dispensed on account of it; but who, at the same time, question or deny that its efficacy ought at all to be attributed to any intrinsic worth in the offering

* Heb. i. 3.

itself, or any dignity, however eminent, in the person of the Mediator who presented it, and who resolve all its saving virtue into the single circumstance of *divine appointment.*

There are shades of difference in the opinions of the class of writers alluded to, but they agree in such points as the following:—that the death of Christ *was not*, or at least that we have no certain evidence that it *was*, absolutely necessary to the salvation of men;—that God, had it so pleased him, might have saved them without the mediation of his Son, and even without a satisfaction to justice at all,—at any rate, that it is unwarrantable to affirm that he could not;—that other ways of salvation, for aught we know, were possible, and that there is no necessary or exclusively appropriate connexion between the death of Christ and the pardon of sin, but only that which results from *God's willing it*;—that the efficacy of the atonement, consequently, does not at all arise from the dignity of the sufferer, but simply from the divine appointment; whence it follows, that there is no essential connexion between the supreme divinity of Christ, and the efficacious value of his offering.——It is my intention, in this discourse, to examine a little the sentiment of these writers.

You will at once perceive, that in this examination, it is not properly the question respecting the *design of the death of Christ* we have to discuss. It is not the avowed adversaries of atonement that we have to combat. In the system now before us, an atonement is assumed to have formed a part of the Divine economy, and to have been actually made by the sufferings and death of Jesus, whose divine dignity is at the same time admitted. We take it at present, therefore, for granted, that, according to the gospel testimony, expiation has been made for human guilt by the blood of one who united in his person the Divine and the human natures;—

and the question is, *Could any inferior atonement (for a higher there could not be) have answered the ends effected by that which has actually been made?* which is the same as the question, *whether the atonement actually made owes its virtue, in any respect, to its own intrinsic excellence and worth, or exclusively to its being that which God saw fit to adopt?* The scheme which resolves all into *Divine appointment* has in it a speciousness, that is, on the first view, somewhat imposing. Before I have done, I hope to convince you, that it is more *specious* than *solid.*—And let it not be imagined by any, that in calling the attention of my hearers to this argument, I am either going to bewilder them in the intricacies of a merely speculative controversy, or to entertain them with what is destitute of any practical or profitable bearing. God forbid! The subject, so far from being a useless metaphysical abstraction, is one, in not a few of the views which it presents to us, of the very deepest interest, and richest utility. It is a subject, of which the study has yielded real delight to my own mind; and I trust that the discussion of it, by illustrating and impressing the value of the atonement which has actually been made, and recommending it to grateful acceptance and steadfast retention, will serve to bring home to the mind and heart all the mightily persuasive motives to "holy conversation and godliness," which, as we have endeavoured to show you, the gospel of the grace of God contains.

In entering, then, on this subject, allow me to observe,—

In the first place: It has always appeared to me, that, under the semblance of a compliment to the wisdom of God as possessed of inexhaustible resources, there is involved no small portion of presumption in the very supposition that the end might have been effected by other means than those which the Divine Being has actually employed.

When our subject is any part of the actual procedure of the Infinitely Wise, the course which it is safest and most becoming for us to follow, is, to form our judgment, not from theoretical reasonings, but *from what has in fact been done.* To go farther than this, is to go beyond our province;—into regions which the mind of Deity indeed has thoroughly explored, or rather which are ever intuitively present to its all-comprehending view,—but which it is not ours to attempt to penetrate;—where the mind that dares the attempt gropes in darkness, and bewilders itself in a labyrinth of fruitless conjecture.

There is one sense, in which, from what God *has* done, we may always, with indubitable certainty, conclude, that it was *impossible* for him to do otherwise. On the supposition of various methods of effecting the same end presenting themselves to his infinite mind, we should always remember, that in the case of a being who is infinite in knowledge, *best* and *only* are synonymous terms. It is, in the strictest sense of the phrase, *absolutely impossible* that such a being should choose any other than that which is best. We pay the same compliment to the Divine *intellect* when we say so, which we pay to his *moral* character in affirming, that "it is impossible with God to lie." It has been truly and beautifully said, that "his *whole nature is one great impulse to what is best.*" Whenever, therefore, we have ascertained what the course is which such a being actually *has* pursued, we have ascertained also the course which alone it was *possible* for him to pursue; except only in such cases (if such there be) which may admit of our imagining a variety of methods for accomplishing the same object presenting themselves to the Infinite Mind as *in all respects equal* in the considerations by which they are respectively recommended to adoption.

"To enter into the councils of the Almighty," says Bishop

Magee, "and to decide what infinite wisdom *must* have "determined under a constitution of things different from "the present, were a speculation not less absurd than it is "impious." Very true. But is it much less absurd, or is it much less impious, to admit the supposition of its being possible for the great God to have done otherwise than he *has* done under the constitution of things which actually exists?—"When Grotius, Stillingfleet, and Clarke," adds the bishop, "are charged by Dr. H. Taylor with contending "for the *necessity* of a vindication of God's honour, either by "the sufferings of the offenders, or by those of Christ in "their room, they are by no means to be considered as con- "tending that it was *impossible* for God to have established "such a dispensation as might enable him to forgive the "sinner without a satisfaction to his justice; but that "according to the method and dispensation which God's "wisdom has chosen, there results a moral necessity of such "vindication, founded in the wisdom and prudence of a "Being, who has announced himself to mankind as an "upright Governor, resolved to maintain the observance of "his laws."* On this statement, two questions immediately present themselves: In the first place; If the peculiar nature of "the method and dispensation which God's wisdom *has* chosen," and on which the *moral necessity* of such a vindication of his honour as was made by the atonement is founded, consists in his having "*announced himself to mankind as an upright Governor, resolved to maintain the observance of his laws*"—we may ask, How is it conceivable, how is it possible, that he should ever have announced himself in any other character, and, consequently, that he should ever have instituted any other order of things?—We certainly can never

* Dissert. 17.

wish to affirm a necessity respecting any divinely instituted order of things, superior in absoluteness to the necessity of his character as "an upright Governor resolved to maintain the observance of his laws." For, in the second place: By *moral necessity* is meant *propriety* and *fitness*. But propriety and fitness constitute a necessity entirely indispensable in the procedure of an all-wise, and almighty, and perfectly holy Being. His acting according to propriety and fitness is as necessary in his *conduct*, as wisdom, and prudence, and moral rectitude, are in his *nature*, or *character*.

The only supposition, then, I repeat, on which his acting otherwise in the case before us than he *has* done can be conceived, is, that of a number of methods (or at least more than one) appearing, in the view of his all-comprehensive mind, *equally eligible*, that is, equal in their respective degrees of *propriety* and *fitness*.—This leads me to observe—

II. In the *second place*:—

In the case now before us, every supposition of this kind is, by the very nature of the thing, completely and peremptorily precluded.—The plan which actually has been followed is so necessarily *unique*; it stands so much alone;—there are in it features which place it so entirely and so transcendently by itself; that it is impossible, for an instant, to imagine any other plans coming into competition, or even into comparison, with it.

We do not feel at all surprised or shocked at the supposition of the blessed God choosing *amongst his creatures* which of them shall be employed in effecting any of his purposes, which it is within the competency of such creatures, as instrumental agents, to accomplish.—But, when the question comes to be, not between different orders or individuals of fellow-creatures, but between the creature and the Creator;

—when the question proposed is—Whether, on the one hand, a man, or an angel, or some superangelic, but still created and dependent being, shall be charged with the redemption of our fallen world;—or whether, on the other, this end shall be accomplished by a Divine person assuming the human nature into union with his own!—our minds immediately and powerfully revolt from all comparison. We cannot, without a consciousness of profanity, admit the idea of competition, even for a moment. The disparity here is so vast;—the interval so infinite;—that the very imagination is blasphemy; insufferable to any pious mind that rightly considers it. We perceive, with intuitive quickness and unhesitating certainty, that if the latter was, *in any sense*, necessary, the former must have been infinitely inadequate; and that if the former had been sufficient, the latter could never have been adopted. If the latter was required by any considerations of fitness and propriety, we are surely not presuming too far when we affirm that there could be neither fitness nor propriety in the former. I am as decidedly hostile, as any man can be, to the presumption of creatures sitting in judgment on Divine counsels, and dogmatically determining what it might be right or wrong for Deity to do;—but in such a case, I am satisfied, there is no presumption. The presumption would lie, not in deciding, but in hesitating for an instant to decide.

III. This will be further manifest, if we consider, *in the third place*:—

The hypothesis which supposes that nothing was wanting but Divine appointment to render an inferior sacrifice sufficient, involves a serious impeachment of more than one of the Divine perfections.—For example:—

1. It involves an impeachment of the *wisdom* of God. It

represents the Infinitely Wise, as having effected by means the greatest and most stupendous, that which might have been accomplished by such as were inferior, and even infinitely inferior. If it be true, that the efficacy of the atonement arises solely from Divine appointment, then it *was* possible, *had God only so willed it*, for the blood of bulls and of goats to have taken away sin.—But surely the impossibility stated in the text, cannot with propriety be understood as signifying that the blood of such animals could not take away sin, only because such was not the appointment of God; and that there wanted only such appointment to give them efficacious sufficiency. The evident import of the affirmation is, that in the *nature of things* it *could not be*. And it is an impossibility to which our judgments give an intuitive assent.—We cannot for a moment connect the two things in our minds, as procuring cause and procured effect:—it is inconceivable, it is impossible, that the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats could ever contain in it such a manifestation of the infinite God's unspotted holiness and inflexible justice,—of the unbending rectitude of his law and the awful immutability of its sanctions,—of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the necessity of its being punished, or, if forgiven, of its being branded with the deep impression of his abhorrence; it is, we say, inconceivable and impossible, that the blood of bulls and of goats could ever contain in it such a manifestation of these things, as should secure and vindicate to the intelligent universe the glory of his character and government in the salvation of sinners:—we feel ourselves, I repeat, unable to connect the two things together;—the slaughter of an ox with "glory to God in the highest!"—the shedding of the blood of a lamb or a he-goat with satisfaction to the justice of offended heaven, and the remission of the penal consequences of transgression against infinite purity, and infinite love.

Admitting the Divinity of the Son of God, it is difficult to conceive how any one can question its being essentially connected with the efficacy of his atonement. For if a Divine person has appeared in our nature, and "suffered, the just for the unjust,"—it must certainly follow, not only that it was *proper* it should be so, but that the end *could not be effected otherwise.* The God of wisdom does nothing in vain: and yet Christ, in a sense sufficiently obvious, must have "died in vain," if that which he effected by *his* blood might have been effected by the blood of goats and calves—a supposition, as shall be noticed more fully by and by, infinitely derogatory to the glory of the Redeemer.

2. The hypothesis involves a severe reflection on the Divine *goodness.*—It is a truth insisted on in his word, that the gift of his own Son is a wonderful, a transcendent display of his goodness.—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."† But if it be true, that the blood of bulls and of goats, had God so willed it, might have answered the end; then, if we can be sure of any thing, we may be sure of this, that God, as a being of immutable goodness, *must* have so willed it; he must have spared the unutterable sufferings of a Person of such eminent susceptibility of mental anguish.—He is, by the hypothesis, supposed to have done, what no idea we can form of a good being will, for a moment, allow us to fancy he possibly *could* do,—to have inflicted *needless suffering,* and that even to a degree by us incomprehensible.—The scenes of Gethsemane and of

* John iii. 16. † 1 John iv. 8, 10.

Calvary,—the cries, and prayers, and tears, the bloody sweat, the bodily tortures, and the soul's deep agonies, of the self-devoted Immanuel,—are in no way reconcileable, on the supposition in question, with Divine benevolence. Surely when the innocent Redeemer there prayed, with strong crying and tears,—"If it be possible, let this cup pass away from me!"—he could never, by the love of his heavenly Father, have been permitted to drink it, could the purpose for which it was mingled and put into his hand have been otherwise accomplished.

3. It impeaches the Divine *justice*.—All infliction of unnecessary suffering, involves a reflection on the righteousness as well as the goodness of him who inflicts it; and above all, such infliction upon a guiltless person—upon perfect innocence. The sufferings of Christ, as stated in a former discourse, can be vindicated from the charge of injustice only on two grounds:—1*st*, Their perfectly *voluntary* nature on the part of the sufferer;—and, 2*dly*, The necessity of them for the attainment of an important end. Both these grounds can be shown to exist, and that in the highest possible degree, in regard to his sufferings. They were *necessarily* voluntary; for previously to his assumption of human nature there was no will superior to his own:—and the end to be answered by them was unspeakably important. But if it was possible to have effected that end *without* them—the vindication of the Divine justice in them will be no easy task.

IV. *In the fourth place.* It may be thought that opposing the blood of Christ to the blood of bulls and of goats is not doing justice to the hypothesis;—that, though not by the slaughter of such victims, yet by the mediation and substitution of some highly exalted creature, the end might have

been effected, had such been the will of God. On this, allow me to observe:—

1. The same objection might be shown to apply to this case as well as to the other, derived from the *wisdom*, *goodness*, and *justice* of God, especially the first of these:—inasmuch as, however high you ascend in the scale of created existence, there must still, when you have reached the very highest point, be an infinite distance between that point and Deity; a distance which annihilates all other distances; and which, therefore, on the supposition of the most exalted of creatures being the appointed mediator and sacrifice, leaves the objection in its full force, that the Divine wisdom is thus conceived to employ, for the attainment of its ends, means infinitely greater than the necessity of the case required.

2. The reason, or nature of the thing, might satisfy us, that the substitution and vicarious obedience of any intelligent creature, however exalted, was out of the question. Every creature owes to its maker, *on its own account*, all the obedience and service of which it is capable; and, except in as far as the gracious promise of God connects reward with obedience, it can never merit any thing *for itself*, far less can it for *others*. There can be no foreign stock of merit, transferrable from one creature to another.

3. There was, therefore, an obvious and beautiful propriety in the appointed Mediator being one who had an entire and absolute right of self-disposal.—The supposed appointment of any creature to the performance of any service (since we can never suppose God to appoint any thing unreasonable or unjust), would necessarily impose an obligation and a duty upon that creature: so that *not* to fulfil the appointment would be an act of disobedience and rebellion. It is impossible that we could ever have felt towards such a

mediator, as we do feel towards one *entirely free*,—not laid, nor capable of being laid, under obligation to a superior: as was the case with him "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

4. Yet *supposing* the *possibility* of a fellow-creature successfully mediating and atoning, and so becoming our saviour from sin and wrath—so that to him we should owe our deliverance from everlasting misery, and our exaltation to eternal and unmingled blessedness:—the obligation would be so prodigious,—the debt of gratitude so incalculably and unutterably great—O how could we avoid dividing our hearts between that fellow-creature and God! My friends, we feel how much we are in danger of this, even in concerns infinitely less important;—how apt we are to give too large a proportion of our grateful affections to the created instrument of good, and to have our hearts drawn away from God, the Supreme Author of all good. O how much greater would have been our danger of an idolatrous attachment, if the good conferred by the created instrumentality were *eternal salvation!*—Amongst other grounds on which I have been led to rest my admiration of the manifold *wisdom* of God in the scheme of redemption, this is one:—that he has so ordered it, as to admit of our giving full and unrestrained scope to the exercise and the utterance of our gratitude, without the remotest hazard of an idolatrous sentiment,—of a single feeling being withdrawn from Deity of which He ought to be the object.—We need lay it under no timid

* Phil. ii. 6—8.

restrictions. Let it flow forth in all its exuberance. It can never exceed,—for the object of it is "God over all, blessed for ever."

V. *Fifthly*:—We ought, in all our estimates on this subject, to take into our account the infinite dignity of one of the parties between whom the reconciliation is to be effected.—On the one hand, it is true, there is a dependent creature, inferior to angels; but on the other, there is "the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, who dwelleth in the high and holy place"—the infinite Jehovah.—The object of atonement is, to assert, and vindicate, and secure, the glory of this infinite Being. Now to *this*—what man,—what angel—what creature, can be considered as competent? Who will stand in the breach, and repair the violated honour of the throne of the Eternal? There is a propriety, as the apostle argues in a preceding part of this Epistle,* in the Mediator being a partaker of the created nature in which the offence requiring his mediation has been committed. But is there not a propriety no less obvious, in his possessing a dignity corresponding to the majesty of the Party offended? If there be—and who can reasonably question it?—where is this dignity to be found? Of the majesty of the Eternal God all other dignity falls infinitely short. Infinitude equalizes, in the comparison with itself, all that is created. How, then, is a suitable, a competent mediator to be provided? The difficulty is met by the testimony of the gospel, which says of Christ, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any

* Chap. ii. 14—17.

thing made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."* It was too high an honour for any creature, or for all the creatures of God together. The Mediator whom the Gospel makes known, partakes alike the nature of both the parties between whom he mediates. "Partaker of the human name," he is touched with the feeling of his peoples' infirmities—a merciful and faithful High Priest,—a kinsman,—a brother: —but at the same time "One" with the Eternal "Father," he is fully competent to sustain, and to magnify in the highest, the glory of the Godhead. And, I think I may add, without extravagance or presumption, the union of the two natures in his one person, while it qualified him fully for his work, exhibits, at the same time, an impressive and delightful emblem of the reconciliation of God and man, whom it was the object of that work to bring into a state of mutual friendship.

VI. Let us consider for a moment, in the next place, what a tendency there is in the hypothesis in question to lessen the impression, on the minds of creatures, of the evil of sin.—We are accustomed, and with perfect truth, to speak of the cross of Christ as containing the most overwhelming display of sin's exceeding sinfulness—the most impressive and awakening testimony ever given by the blessed God, of his infinite detestation of it. This view of the atonement we have formerly illustrated, in considering its nature and vindicating its principle, as well as in pointing out and enforcing its practical influence. We have shown what an impression it is fitted to make on the mind and heart, of the

* John i. 1—3, 14.

incalculable amount of evil which, according to the Divine estimate, all transgression must contain, and what a power of restraint from all sin it is thus calculated to exert, in the character of all who believe it. But on the supposition we are now discussing, this is all an illusion. The only ground, you will at once perceive, on which the inference can at all rest, is the *necessity* of such an expiation. If no such sacrifice, was necessary;—if, had it so pleased God, the mediation of a fellow-creature might have answered the same end;—nay, if, had God seen fit so to appoint it, it *was* possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should have taken away sin:—then the testimony regarding sin, borne to mankind by the sufferings and death of the Son of God, is utterly extravagant. We are entirely misled by it. Sin is not at all the unutterable evil which transactions so stupendous, and scenes so fearful as the incarnation, agonies, and crucifixion of the Son of God, have led us to imagine it. Jehovah has written, in the blood of his own Son, a lesson which it would have been quite enough for him to have written in the blood of a slaughtered victim of the flock or of the herd. The solemn and awful impression, therefore, of the infinite enormity and guilt of transgression is gone. We feel that it is quite beyond the truth. We are unable to retain it.

VII. *In the seventh place*:—The hypothesis tends to lower the Saviour in the grateful estimation of sinners of mankind, and in the ardent and delighted admiration of other creatures.

When we consider the Redeemer as alone capable of achieving the work given him to do,—the great work of our salvation;—when we contemplate him as coming forward to effect what no other in earth or heaven, no other in the universe, was equal to; how transcendently glorious does he appear! how worthy of our supreme affection, and unbounded

praise! But what are we to think of him, if, indeed, there was no such exigency,—no indispensable necessity for any thing so stupendous as the appearance of a Divine person, to atone for sin, in the likeness of sinful flesh? What are we to think of him, if there wanted only the appointment of God to render any fellow-creature competent to the task; if there wanted only this to impart the same efficacy to the sacrifice of a lamb of the flock, as to that of the Divine and spotless Lamb of God! How cooling, how quenching is this, to the flame of grateful love,—how repressing to the ardour of adoring praise!

Angels admire and adore the Divine Redeemer. They sing—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!" But what would angels think of him, were they to be assured, that he has done no more than might have been effected by one of themselves, had it only pleased God so to ordain it!—that there has been nothing in his work of salvation appropriately divine,—but that the glory which they unite in paying to him they might successfully have won to themselves, had the Eternal Father only chosen to keep a little lower—(yet this little would have been nothing short of infinite)—in the selection of a mediator. This will never do. We know from the record, that Jehovah has actually gone for a Mediator, above all creatures; that it was not possible for him to go higher than he *has* gone:—and we may be well assured, that this being the fact, no inferior redeemer, no sacrifice of lower value, could have answered the end:—and we may still, with full hearts, give the Saviour the praise of having accomplished for us what was beyond the reach of all created natures:—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen!"*

VIII. In the last place:—The hypothesis has thus, on the grounds that have been mentioned, the evident tendency to diminish and destroy the practical influence of the gospel.—Every thing must have *this* tendency, that contributes to lessen our impressions of the evil of sin, and of our obligations to the Saviour.—It has the injurious tendency I now ascribe to it, for example—

As to *humility* and *lowliness of spirit*:—They are yet ignorant of the gospel, who are not aware, in theory and in experience, that this is the first sentiment or feeling which the knowledge and faith of it inspire. And of all the truths which the gospel testimony reveals, there is no one so fitted to humble the heart of the sinner—to "lay him low, and keep him there"—as the necessity of *such* an expiation for guilt as has been made by the sufferings of the Son of God. How abasing the thought, that our condition was so deeply deplorable, our guilt so great, our misery so irretrievable, as to stand in need of such a Mediator, of such an atonement! —How humbling the reflection and the consciousness, that there still remains in us, even in our pardoned and renewed state, so large a measure of that evil which has required an expiation so fearful, and which the Holy God has thus practically shown to be so infinitely disapproved and hated by him! —of that which infused all its exquisite bitterness into the cup of the atoning Saviour!—But the sentiment I have been opposing takes off from these impressions. Upon the principle that such an atonement was *appointed* indeed, but was not

* Rev. i. 5, 6.

necessary,—they are unreasonable. Our humiliation need not be so deep—our contrition need not be so bitter—our self-loathing need not be so unmingled;—our case was not after all *quite* so desperate; we did not absolutely require such a mediation; and means of deliverance so extraordinary might, it seems, have been spared. Nothing can be plainer, than that in proportion as you take away the conviction of the *necessity* of the atonement, you take away its humbling and self-abasing tendency.

Again:—our *reverence for God*, our "*godly fear*," is excited and maintained by the thought that his glory *required* to be illustrated and secured by *such means*:*—that nothing short of Divine mediation was sufficient for the vindication of Divine honour;—that so sacred was the glory of every perfection of his character, that rather than it should, in any one point, be tarnished, the Son of God himself must interpose, by humiliation, sufferings, and death, to maintain its lustre unsullied in the treatment of guilty men.—But what are we to think, if, in all the stupendous apparatus of human redemption, this Almighty Being has only been making a useless display!—if the vindication of his honour did not, after all, stand in need of any such wonderful provision!—if, had he so willed it, a creature, a man, or an angel, might have sufficiently answered for offences against his government, and sustained the glory of his Name!

Similar remarks might be made as to our *hatred and dread of sin*. These feelings, essential to our shunning it in practice, and to our steadfastly following holiness, must ever, as shown in a former discourse, be proportioned to our impressions of its intrinsic enormity, and of the degree in which it is hateful to God. We have already noticed the effect which the

* Heb. xii. 28, 29.

sentiment we are discussing is fitted to have in lowering and even dissipating these impressions. But admit, on the other hand, the necessity of the expiation actually made,—admit that nothing less could have availed for taking away our guilt;—and how deep must be the hatred, how sensitive and shrinking the dread of sin which it impresses on the believer's mind! Surely, I repeat, with the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary before their eyes, they must be "fools indeed who can make a mock at sin."

I only add, that the sentiment is unfavourable to that principle which is the spring of all Christian obedience and active service—I mean *gratitude.* Gratitude will always be in proportion to two things—to our *sense of unworthiness,* and our impression of the *magnitude of the blessings we receive.*—We can never be grateful for what we fancy ourselves to deserve, or our title to which we are not sensible of having thoroughly forfeited. Now there is nothing that so deeply affects the mind with a sense of utter destitution, of entire worthlessness, of obnoxiousness to all that is fearful in the wrath of God and in the second death, as the necessity of the expiation which the gospel reveals. What could be our desert but perdition, and how dreadful must that perdition have been, if nothing could save us but a Divine mediation —nothing but the substitution and humiliation unto death of "the only-begotten of the Father!"—And with regard to the blessings of salvation which are bestowed for his sake, surely they must be blessings of no light value, of no easy appraisement, when the price is considered at which they have been obtained, or rather, (to keep by the phraseology of the New Testament,) at which we ourselves have been redeemed to the enjoyment of them. They are blessings that could not have been provided for us at a less expense than "the precious blood of Christ." They are not blessings for which a needless and

extravagant ransom has been paid,—on which more has been expended than they are worth; but blessings of which the real preciousness is discernible in what has been given for their attainment,—or for the ransom and restoration of sinners to the forfeited possession of them. Gratitude for redemption by the blood of Christ, to the enjoyment of blessings of such transcendent excellence and incorruptible permanence, is the great impulse to Christian activity.—But this subject has been formerly illustrated, and we cannot resume it.

The illustration of the last particular precludes the necessity of any further practical application of the subject and argument of this Discourse to believers in Christ.—I shall close with a single reflection, addressed to the ungodly and the careless.—If it be indeed so, as we have been endeavouring to demonstrate, that no expiation could avail to take away sin but the fearful sufferings and sacrificial blood of the Son of God, what cause have you to consider, with trembling seriousness, the deep guilt you must be incurring, and the state of dreadful peril in which you must stand!—Sin is committed against an Infinite Being. That Infinite Being himself is the only competent judge of the amount of evil which it contains, of the punishment which it deserves, and of the satisfaction necessary to warrant its forgiveness under his just and holy government.—You may think lightly of sin. You may call it by palliative names. You may be altogether unimpressed either with its intrinsic enormity, or with the extent of the charge that lies against yourselves. You may compare yourselves with others; you may be flattered by the comparison, and may say to your deceitful hearts, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace; fancying you have done no great harm, and are in no great danger.—But when you think and speak thus, you are at awful variance with the God of heaven. O remember, it is *his* judgment of sin,—not your own, or that of your

fellow-sinners, that most concerns you. It is not by *your* or *their* thoughts and impressions, that your future destinies are to be determined, but by *his*.—Light as your estimate of sin may be, his is far otherwise. Here you have his testimony. It is written in his word. It is written on the cross. It is written in blood;—in "blood Divine." It is the testimony of righteousness, and the testimony of mercy. Righteousness pronounces the sentence of condemnation:—Mercy provides the remedy:—and the nature of the remedy shows you, in a light the most awakening and alarming, the fearfulness of the condemnation. If a Divine expiation alone could atone for transgression,—how miserable the infatuation that disregards this atonement, and leaves the sinner under the load of unexpiated guilt! If God "spared not his own Son," how can you flatter yourselves that he will spare *you?* If for him he mingled a cup of such incomprehensible bitterness, and could not suffer it to pass from him till he had drunk it to its very dregs,—will he hesitate, think you, to put the cup of trembling into the hands of those who "neglect his great salvation?" If the sword of his justice awake against the Son of his everlasting love,—will it slumber in its scabbard when the execution is demanded of merited vengeance against the despisers of his mercy? Will he have more compassion on the enemies of his Son, than on his Son himself? Will the thought of their misery move the bowels of his pity, to avert the curse from his impenitent foes, when He who was the object of unmingled complacency and infinite tenderness was allowed to bear that curse in all its fulness of woe? O, indulge not the vain imagination! Hazard not your immortal souls in an experiment, so full of base ingratitude, and therefore so hopeless and so damning, on the compassions of the Holy One! His compassions are infinite. But his infinite compassions are concentrated and exhausted in the cross of his Son.

There they are to be found by you, in all their fulness and in all their freeness:—but elsewhere, you will seek them in vain. Read in the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary the lesson of judgment as well as of grace:—and beware of the guilt and peril of at once resisting the righteousness, and despising the mercy, of your Sovereign and Judge!'

DISCOURSE X.

ON THE DIVINITY AND PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MATTH. xxviii. 19.

"*Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"

I SHOULD have no objection, with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, to take my stand in this text.—It would, perhaps, be going too far to say, that I should certainly be a firm believer of that doctrine, if there were not another passage in the Bible affirming it:—because, as I have more than once hinted before, I should expect an article of so much importance to hold a more prominent place in the revelation which contained it.—Yet, even on this supposition, I know not well how I could have interpreted the text, according to any thing like its plain and obvious meaning, and at the same time, have remained an unbeliever of the doctrine.

That the ordinance of baptism, prescribed in these words, whilst it signifies initiation into the faith and profession of the Christian doctrine, and particularly of that scheme of redemption, in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are ever represented as fulfilling their respective parts, —involves in it, at the same time, an act of solemn worship, an invocation of the thrice-holy Name in which it is administered, seems to me very evident. Now, how (as was remarked in the first of this series of Discourses,) how can

we imagine any thing more fitted to mislead, than the supposition, that "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," means, the name of the only true God, and of one of his human creatures, and of an attribute, or power, or influence, or mode of operation?—On the Trinitarian hypothesis, the form is natural, and proper. On that of its adversaries, it appears to be utterly irreconcilable with right notions, and becoming impressions, of the peculiar honour due to Him who "will not give his glory to another."

The very form of expression seems to convey the idea, not only of a Trinity of persons, but of that Trinity as subsisting in the one Godhead:—baptizing them in—(or *into*, for the change of translation does not at all affect the present argument,)—baptizing them in *the Name*,—not the *names*,—but the *one name*,—"of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."—If, however, it should be insisted, that "*the name*" s to be supplied before each,—"in the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Spirit;"—then, what are we to make of this last phrase, "*the name of the Holy Spirit*," if the Holy Spirit means an attribute, or a power, or influence?—An attribute of Deity it cannot, indeed, be supposed to mean: for all the attributes of Deity are, of course, included in "*the name of the Father*," previously mentioned; and to baptize in the name of one of his attributes, after having baptized in his own name, while the thing itself is most unnatural, would certainly be a very vain repetition.—It must mean, then, a *communicated power* or *influence*. But what, in that case, are we to understand by being baptized in, or into *the name of this influence?* In answer to this question, our opponents shall speak for themselves.—After quoting the words of our text, one of them, deservedly eminent, thus writes,—and others agree with him:—"*that is*, 'Go ye, therefore, into all the world, and teach,

" or disciple, all nations, baptizing them into the profession " of faith in, and an obligation to obey, the doctrine taught " by Christ, with authority from God the Father, and con- " firmed by the Holy Ghost.' "*—But if this was our Lord's meaning, why did he not plainly express it? It would surely have been quite as easy to convey this idea in simple and direct terms, as in a form so strange and enigmatical as that in our text.—And here, I may remark by the way, lies one great general objection to a vast number of the interpretations of scripture given by our opponents. When they say, "*that is*," and subjoin their explanation, they make the writers and speakers use language, such as no man of common understanding, provided he had other words within his power, would ever think of employing, to express the sentiment which his interpreters affirm he intended to convey. When we read their interpretations, the question is perpetually recurring, " If these writers really meant this, why did not they say so " in plain terms? This is an idea sufficiently simple;—one " which, setting inspiration out of the question, they could " have been at no loss to express, so as to have been at once " distinctly understood. Why, then, have not they done so? " Why have they chosen to be unintelligible? Why have " they adopted phraseology so unnatural and ambiguous?— " phraseology, such as not one man in a thousand would ever " have imagined to convey the sense which you are pleased to " affix to it?"

But further:—the writer above referred to explains his meaning as follows:—" By the Holy Ghost, as I apprehend, " we are here to understand, the miracles of our Saviour's " ministry, and likewise the miracles wrought by his apostles, " and the spiritual gifts bestowed on the apostles, and other

* Lardner's First Postscript to his Letter on the Logos. Works, Vol. XI. p. 147.

"disciples of Jesus, and all believers in general, soon after "our Lord's ascension, and all the miraculous attestations "of the truth and Divine original of the doctrine taught by "Jesus Christ."*—According to this explanation, "*the Holy Ghost,*" in our text, means *miracles and spiritual gifts*:—and "*the name of the Holy Ghost*" must, of course, mean, *the name of these miracles and spiritual gifts!* What unaccountable phraseology is this!—according to which, being *baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit* is the expression chosen, to convey the simple idea, of being baptized into the profession of a religion, of which the truth was confirmed by miracles!—And this strange, anomalous language, we must conceive to have been used by Him who "spoke as never man spoke."—If, indeed, the glosses of our opponents, on this, and some other occasions, were just, he certainly *did* speak as never man spoke; although in a sense of the expression very different from the true one.

That this passage has always been felt by Antitrinitarians, as a strong one against their system, appears very strikingly from the disposition evinced by some of them in ancient times, to improve upon the words of Christ:—"*In the name* "*of the Father,*" said they, "*and through the Son, and by, or* "*in, the Holy Ghost.*"—This *shyness*, indeed, of the plain phraseology of the Scriptures, is characteristic of their system; and affords, of itself, a strong presumption, that it has not the countenance of the Bible.

I have endeavoured, on former occasions, to show, with respect to the *second* of the persons mentioned in our text, how far the supposition is from being true, which I made at the commencement of this Discourse;—the supposition, that is, of this being the only text affirming the Trinity of persons

* Lardner, Ibidem.

in the Godhead.—It is my design, in the present Discourse, to do the same with regard to the *third*—the HOLY SPIRIT. —I must, therefore, take leave, for a while, of my text, and enter on a more general discussion of this subject.

I suppose it will readily be admitted, that *if there be a plurality of persons at all* in the one Godhead, that plurality is a *Trinity.* For, although the views of the doctrine of the Trinity, held by those who have attempted to explain it, have been various;—yet *trinity* and *unity* (taking the latter term in the sense affixed to it by Antitrinitarians) are, properly, the only two hypotheses on the subject. All who believe the doctrine of a *plurality* to be taught in the Scriptures, believe that plurality to consist of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. None have believed in more,—none in fewer. *Plurality* and *Trinity* may, therefore, on this question, be considered as convertible terms; and, consequently, every proof of a plurality as a proof of a Trinity. On this principle, as the whole of the evidence of the Divinity of Christ, is evidence of a *plurality;* it might all be considered as bearing on the point which it is now my object to establish—the PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In the more direct discussion of this subject, I shall begin with the evidence of *Personality.*

To some of you this may, perhaps, appear preposterous. —But by the proof of personality, on the present occasion, is meant, it should be observed, the proof *that the Holy Spirit is a person at all.* On our former subject, there was no necessity for our leading a proof of this nature; the personality of Jesus Christ, in this sense of the term, having never been disputed. The only question on *that* subject was, not whether he was a person, but whether he was a person *in the Godhead.* But in the argument now before us, the case is

otherwise. The Holy Spirit is not considered, at least in general, by the opponents of his Divinity, as a creature, possessing distinct personal existence; but as a quality, a power, an influence. In this case, therefore, the proof of personality is an important and essential step towards the establishment of Divinity. And, indeed, the evidence of the former will be found, in many instances, to involve in it a proof of the latter.

What, then, do we mean by *a person?*—and what is the *proper evidence* of personality?—By a *person* we mean that which *possesses personal properties:*—and the only legitimate, I might say the only *possible* proof of personality, in the present case, or, indeed, in any case, is the proof of the possession of such properties:—and, in the particular instance before us, the only ground on which this can at all be ascertained, is the ascription of such properties to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures of truth.

Even in the department of *natural religion*, how is it that we prove the personality of the Deity? Not from any knowledge we possess of his *essence:* for of his essence, and of the essence of all things, we are entirely ignorant. It is from the indications presented in his works, of his possessing the properties, and performing the acts, of a person.—"Contrivance, "if established," says an eminent writer on this subject, "appears to me to prove every thing which we wish to prove. "Amongst other things, it proves the *personality* of the Deity, "as distinguished from what is sometimes called nature, some- "times a principle: which terms, in the mouths of those who "use them philosophically, seem to be intended to admit and "to express an efficacy, but to exclude and to deny a per- "sonal agent. Now that which can contrive, which can "design, must be a person. These capacities constitute per- "sonality; for they imply consciousness, and thought. They "require that which can perceive an end, or purpose, as well

" as the power of providing means, and of directing them to " their end. They require a centre in which perceptions " unite, and from which volitions flow; which is mind. The " acts of a mind prove the existence of a mind: and in what- " ever a mind resides, is a person."*

It is a fact beyond all controversy, that in the Scriptures all the variety of personal properties and personal acts, on which such an inference can be founded, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit:—

Let me, first of all, then, direct your attention to a few out of the many passages that might be adduced on this subject.

1.—John xiv. 16, 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7—14.—" And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever:"—" But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you:"—" But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:"—" Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will convince the world, of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"—" When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

In these passages, observe *in the first place*, the Holy Spirit

* Paley's Natural Theology, Chap. xxiii. at the beginning.

is distinctly spoken of as *coming, testifying, receiving, showing, teaching, hearing, speaking;* all of which evidently imply personal agency.—2*dly*, In connexion with this, observe the appellation by which he is denominated,—"*the Comforter*,"—or, as it is rendered by some, the *advocate*:—and not only so, but, as distinguished from the speaker, Jesus Christ, himself a person,—"*another Comforter*."—3*dly*, Notice also the remarkable use, in different instances, of the masculine *personal pronoun*: "The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which the Father will send in my name, *he** shall teach you all things:"—"But when the Comforter is come, *whom* I will send unto you from the Father, *he** shall testify of me:"—"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send *him*† unto you. And when *he** is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"—"When *he*,* the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you in all truth; for he shall not speak of (or from) *himself*:"—"*he** shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

These are all as clear indications of personality, as language could afford.

2.—Acts xiii. 2, 4. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the *Holy Spirit said*, Separate *me (to me*, or *for me)* Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto *I have called them*."—"So they, being *sent forth by the Holy Spirit*, departed unto Seleucia."

Surely no words could convey the idea of personality more clearly and explicitly than these.—The Holy Spirit *calls* Barnabas and Saul to a particular work; and *commands* others to set them apart to that work. They are, accordingly, set apart *for him;* and they are then *sent forth by him.*

* ἐκεῖνος. † αὐτον.

3.—Acts xv. 28. "For *it seemed good to the Holy Spirit*, and to us, to lay upon you no other burden than these necessary things."

In these words, the *Holy Spirit* must mean, either a person, or that Divine influence which was imparted to the household of Cornelius, when Peter preached to them, and "opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." To speak of any thing *seeming good to that influence itself*, is a great deal more than unnatural:—it is nonsense. The influence was only the indication of the good pleasure of him whose influence it was. His *gifts* were the intimation of his *will*:—and it was in this view that the apostles considered them, when, inferring the mind of the Spirit from the interposition of his miraculous energy, they said, "*It seemed good to the Holy Ghost.*"

4.—Acts xvi. 6, 7. "Now, when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were *forbidden of the Holy Ghost* to preach the word in Asia; After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but *the Spirit suffered them not.*"

Here the Holy Spirit appears *prohibiting* and *preventing*; directing these missionaries in their course, according to his pleasure, and in opposition to their own previous intentions.

5.—Acts xxi. 11. "And when he (Agabus) was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, *Thus saith the Holy Ghost*, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles:"—Acts xxviii. 25. "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, *Well spake the Holy Ghost*, by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers,"—&c.—Luke ii. 26. "And *it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit*, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ:" —Acts xx. 23. "Save that *the Holy Spirit witnesseth* in every

city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me:"—1 Tim. iv. 1. "Now *the Spirit speaketh expressly*, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith:"—Heb. ix. 8. "*The Holy Ghost this signifying*, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest:"—Heb. iii. 7. "Wherefore, *as the Holy Ghost saith*, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts:"—Rev. ii. 7. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what *the Spirit saith* unto the churches."

In these, and many other passages, the Holy Spirit is described as *saying, speaking, witnessing, signifying, intimating his mind and will.*—I need not repeat that such language evidently proceeds on the supposition of personality: and the utmost violence is requisite, to interpret it on any other principle.

6.—1 Cor. xii. 11. "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally *as he will.*"

This, in the connexion in which it stands, is a strikingly conclusive passage.—The Holy Spirit is represented as possessing *will;* and as distributing the various miraculous gifts, *as that sovereign will directed.* The *possession of will* necessarily implies personality:—and the *sovereign manner* in which that will operates, in the distribution of supernatural powers, clearly shows it to be nothing less than a *Divine will.*

These passages of Scripture, then, which are only a specimen of many more that might be mentioned, represent the Holy Spirit as *willing, hearing, speaking, acting, commanding, forbidding, approving, bearing witness, receiving and executing a commission.*—That these are all personal acts,—acts of an intelligent agent,—can admit of no dispute. The inference, therefore, is, that the Spirit,—the Holy Spirit,—the Spirit of God, respecting which this is the current language of the Scriptures, must be such an agent.

To objections I shall come by and by.—But the argument

on this branch of the subject is not closed. An additional, and most satisfactory proof of personality, arises from his being represented as the *object of the dispositions and acts of others;* of such dispositions and acts as cannot be supposed to terminate on what is a mere attribute, or power, or influence; but only on *a person*, or intelligent agent.

1.—Matth. xii. 31, 32. "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come."

In these words, the Holy Spirit is the object of a particular sin;—the sin of blasphemy.—By "Beelzebub the prince of the devils," the Pharisees, it is very obvious, meant *a person;* and they expressed themselves accordingly. To this wicked, malignant agent, Jesus, in his answer, opposes *the Spirit of God.* And, without at all entering into any discussion respecting the precise nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which would be foreign to my present design, it is sufficient to observe, that he is evidently distinguished here from *the Son of Man*, just as we are accustomed to distinguish one person from another.—"They are both spoken of, with "respect unto the same things, in the same manner; and the "things mentioned are spoken concerning them universally "in the same sense. If the Holy Ghost were only the virtue "and power of God, then present with Jesus Christ in all that "he did, Christ and that power could not be distinctly spoken "against; for they were but one and the same."*

2.—Acts v. 3, 4. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan

* Owen on the Spirit, Vol. I. p. 155.

filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?—Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God:" —and verse 9th—"Then Peter said unto her, How is it, that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?"

I quote this passage at present, not in direct evidence of the *Divinity* of the Spirit, (in this view I may have occasion to notice it afterwards) but simply of his *Personality*.—He is, in these verses, represented as *lied unto*, and as *tempted*, or *tried*. But how can any one be *lied unto*, but one who is capable of hearing and receiving a testimony, and of discerning its truth or falsehood? Or how can any one be *tempted* or *tried*, but one who is possessed of understanding and will? —We are said to tempt God, when we impiously make trial of his faithfulness, or power, or justice. Ananias and Sapphira tempted the Spirit of the Lord, by their foolishly and wickedly presuming, that they might escape detection, or escape punishment:—neither of which could possibly take place, except through a defect of knowledge, or a defect of holiness.

3.—Eph. iv. 30. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Can any thing be the subject of the passion of grief, or can any thing, unless in the boldest flights of poetry, be so represented, that is not a *person*, possessed of understanding and consciousness?—To say that "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed," means, "Offend not God, by whose holy spirit ye are sealed,"* is a commentary;—and a commentary, it is worth noticing, which is so far distinctly in our favour; for it proceeds upon the admission (if it does not, why was it introduced at all?) that *if* the Holy Spirit

* Improved Version, Note on the Text.

were really represented, in the verse, as grieved, or offended, by those parts of temper and conduct that are enumerated, *it would follow*, that this Spirit must be acknowledged to be a person. Indeed, to suppose the apostle to speak of grieving an influence, or energy, or emanation of power, would be worse than ridiculous.

4.—Acts vii. 51. "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

This is a passage of a similar kind to the last.—The Holy Spirit is here represented as the object of *resistance*—one whose testimony and whose will and authority were scorned and violently striven against.

Surely, then, that must be a person, possessing intelligence and will, and the other properties which constitute personality, which is thus represented as *blasphemed and spoken against*, as *lied unto*, *tempted*, and *resisted*.

Let me now shortly consider the great general objection which is urged against this reasoning.—Such language, it is alleged, in which the Holy Spirit is described, directly or indirectly, as possessing personal properties, and performing personal acts, is entirely *figurative*. It belongs to the species of figure called *personification*; in which, as well as in all the variety of tropes and metaphors, the Eastern style peculiarly abounds.

It would be both uncandid and foolish, to attempt evading the force of this objection, by denying the existence, or even by questioning the frequency, of this figure of speech; according to which personal characters are ascribed to powers and attributes, as well as to other objects, which are universally known to possess no distinct personality, no conscious existence.—Instances of this will immediately recur to the

remembrance of all who are, in any degree, familiar with the sacred volume.—Wisdom, Righteousness, Charity, Sin, Death, the Grave, Famine, Pestilence, the Sun, and other objects, are thus personified;—that is, are represented as thinking, feeling, and acting, as if they were real persons. —But who, in such cases, except the most stupid and ignorant, (if, indeed, even these,) is ever in danger of being misled? —Language of this kind occurs chiefly in poetry, or in such composition as admits, with propriety, the aid of poetical embellishment; and it is interpreted according to the license of poetical or rhetorical diction. If it were only in such composition as this, that the ascription of personal properties and acts to the Holy Spirit was to be found, there would, in that case, be ground for the objection against our inference; —nay, if in plainer composition it were uniformly otherwise, I should be disposed to admit the force of the objection, even to the entire overthrow of the inference.—But the fact, as we have already seen, is far different. The ascription of personal characters and operations, to the Spirit of God, is to be found, not in the language of poetry and impassioned eloquence merely, but in the plainest prose;—in the language of historical narration; of simple, familiar instruction; and even of promises, grants, and laws, in which precision is the first and most essential requisite. What, then, are we to make of a book, which, on the principle of the objection in question, requires, for its just explanation, that laws, and grants, and promises, and that the various descriptions of historical and didactic composition, be interpreted according to the same canons as are applied to the language of poetry and eloquence? This is, surely, most unreasonable. It tends to involve the contents of revelation in inextricable perplexity. Any plain reader of the Bible, possessing an ordinary measure of understanding, (and we should never allow

ourselves to forget, that for such, as well as for the learned, the Bible was designed,) would certainly be led to conclude, that the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, which he finds so often introduced, is *a person*, an intelligent agent, a conscious and active subsistence.

We ought also to recollect, that while, with regard to the Holy Spirit, the ordinary current phraseology of the Scriptures is framed on the supposition of his Personality;—this is not the case respecting any thing else which, although occasionally personified, is not a person. In other cases, the language of personification is the exception to the general phraseology. But in this case, it is quite the reverse:—any expressions that seem inconsistent with the idea of personality form the exception; the general complexion of the language being all in its favour.

Nothing can be more unreasonable, than to insist, because similar or even the same things that are ascribed to the Holy Spirit are also ascribed to other objects, in cases where the figure is perfectly and incontrovertibly obvious, and where there does not exist the slightest possibility of any person being misled by it; that therefore the ascription of these things to the Holy Spirit must be figurative also.—When, for example, we have shown that the Holy Spirit is described as possessing *will;* we are immediately reminded that *so is the wind*—"the wind bloweth where it listeth."—When we speak of him as *a witness* bearing testimony; *a stone*, we are instantly told, and a *heap of stones*, are represented as witnesses; and *heaven and earth* are called to witness.—When we refer to passages in which he appears as *speaking; the Scriptures*, it is objected, are also said to speak:—as *teaching; nature* too is represented as teaching. And so on, in a great variety of similar instances. Such a principle as this is utterly inconsistent with all the established rules of sound philoso-

phical criticism. If it were ever to be admitted as just, we should, I apprehend, find ourselves greatly at a loss to prove the Personality of the Deity at all. For there is no one of those properties by which personality is usually thought to be ascertained, either ascribed to him in the Scriptures, or from his works discovered to belong to him, which is not at times figuratively attributed to creatures that are destitute of it.

But are there not, it will be asked, some things said of the Holy Spirit, which cannot, in their literal acceptation, be affirmed respecting a person?—Beyond all question there are. The Holy Spirit is said to be *poured out*, to be *shed forth*, and to *fall* upon men:—persons are also said to be *anointed* with the Spirit, and *baptized* with the Spirit.

The following remarks on this point I submit to the candid consideration of my hearers:—

1*st*, There is, in such expressions, in which sense soever we understand them, *a figure at any rate*.—A *person*, it is very true, cannot literally be poured out. But neither can a *power*, or *virtue*, or *influence*. All that can be pretended is, that the figure in the latter case is not so violent as in the former:—a figure there certainly is in both. The existence, then, of a figure must be admitted by all parties.

2*dly*, Our opponents say, that the phrase *the Spirit of God* sometimes signifies *God himself*, although they affirm, at the same time, that its more general meaning is the *Divine power, or influence*:—May not *we*, then, be permitted to say, without being censured as very unreasonable, that the same phrase, while it generally means the Spirit personally, is sometimes to be understood of his various influences?

3*dly*, Such a figure of speech, in which the *person* is put for his character, his qualities, his influence, his doctrine, is by no means uncommon; and is used in cases where no dispute about personality at all exists.—Thus, in the following examples:—

"As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so *walk ye in him: rooted* and *built up in him*:"—"Know ye not your ownselves, how that *Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobates?"—"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until *Christ be formed in you*:"—"As many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, have *put on Christ*."* Many others might be added; but these may suffice. The question, then, is—Is there, on the supposition of the Holy Spirit's Personality, any thing more unnatural or harsh, in the phrases in question, of his being *poured out, shed forth*, of his *falling* upon men, and of persons being *anointed* and *baptized* with the Spirit, than there is in these other phrases which have just been quoted, in which believers are said to *walk in Jesus Christ*, to be *rooted in him;* to have Christ *in them*, and *formed in them;* and to *put on Christ*, or *clothe themselves with him?* Every one perceives at once that, in such expressions, Jesus Christ is not, and cannot be, meant personally. Yet who ever thinks of arguing against his Personality, because such things cannot be literally said respecting a person? I imagine that in fact as little difficulty has been experienced, by simple unsophisticated readers of the Bible, in the interpretation of the phraseology relative to the Holy Spirit.—Indeed, even in the language of ordinary life, the figure on which such phrases are founded is not uncommon. Thus we are accustomed to say of a son, that he has a great deal of *his father* in him, when we mean of his father's dispositions:—of a benevolent man, that he has much of *Howard* in him, when we mean of Howard's humanity:—and so in many other instances.

If, then, in such expressions, a figure must be admitted at any rate, whether the Holy Spirit be a person, or merely a

* Col. ii. 6, 7. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Gal. iv. 19. iii. 27.

Divine energy;—if our opponents themselves are constrained to understand the same phrase in different acceptations;—and if it is not unnatural, as from parallel instances we have seen, to put the person for his power, or influence, or operation:—I have only to request, that, taking these observations along with you, you will candidly weigh such expressions as those we have been considering, against the multitude of passages in which personality is so plainly attributed to the Spirit of God; and judge for yourselves, on which side lies the superior force of the argument, and magnitude of the difficulty.—For my own part, I feel no hesitation: and if any of *you* feel otherwise, I trust that any remaining doubt will be fully removed, by what remains to be laid before you, in evidence of the Spirit's DIVINITY.

To the passages on this branch of my subject I shall refer with great brevity:—because, if the *Personality* of the Spirit be once admitted, his *Divinity* can hardly be questioned.—It must have occurred to all of you, that the acts and operations ascribed, in many of the passages which have been quoted, to the Spirit of God, possess the clear and decided characters of Divinity. The only question is, whether they are ascribed to the Spirit *personally*. If this question be considered as satisfactorily settled in the affirmative, it will immediately follow, that THE SPIRIT IS GOD.

There are, however, some further evidences of his Divinity which are of a still more direct nature.—To a few of these let me now request your attention.

1.—Acts v. 3, 4. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?—Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

Lying to the Holy Ghost is, in these verses, the same as *lying unto God.*—To say that it means lying to *inspired men*, does not affect the conclusion. For by whom were these men inspired?—They were "holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Ananias and Sapphira lied, not to the supernatural *influence* which Peter possessed; but to the Divine *Author* of that influence;—not to the *inspiration* of Peter, but to *Him by whom Peter was inspired.*

2.—1 Cor. iii. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"—compared with chap. vi. 19. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which ye have of God?"—and 2 Cor. vi. 16. "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Christians are thus not only called the *temple of God*, because the Spirit of God dwelt in them:—but they are also called expressly the *temple of the Holy Ghost* himself. The allusion is, as all of you are aware, to the temple at Jerusalem of old, considered as the place of the Divine residence;—the house where Jehovah dwelt. And he of whom it is said, with this allusion, that believers are HIS *temple*, must be God.—It is no valid objection to this, that when it is said "your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost," it is added, "*which ye have of God.*" For, according to the view which we take of the scheme of redemption, we not only consider Jesus Christ, although a Divine person in our nature, as the gift of God's love, but also the *in-dwelling*, as it has been termed, of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, as the fruit of the Saviour's mediation, and an expression of the satisfaction of the Godhead in his finished work.

3.—1 Cor. ii. 9, 11. "But as it is written, Eye hath not

seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man (or no one) but the Spirit of God."

In these verses, we affirm, the attribute of *omniscience* is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. They furnish evidence both of his Personality, and of his Divinity. Of his *Personality*—from the *nature* of those properties and acts which are imputed to him:—he possesses understanding and knowledge, and communicates this knowledge to others.—Of his *Divinity*—from the description and extent of this knowledge. God's ways and judgments are frequently declared to be *unsearchable*, and *past finding out*:—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?"*—"Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" †—Even in the verses before us, observe how the apostle first affirms the undiscoverable nature of those truths of which he speaks—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him:"—and having thus declared the impenetrable secrecy of the Divine counsels, he immediately adds: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth

* Rom. xi. 33, 34. † Isaiah xl. 13, 14.

all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God."—Surely, he who has a full and intimate acquaintance with all Divine counsels, with what is pronounced unsearchable by any created intelligence, must possess the perfection of Deity.—It has been alleged, however, in opposition to this conclusion, that the Spirit of God is here compared to the spirit of man; and that the spirit of man is not a person. To this objection it is sufficient for my present purpose to reply:—"The spirit of a man is his rational soul, "endued with knowledge and understanding. This is an "individual intelligent substance, capable of subsistence in a "separate condition. Grant the Spirit of God to be so far a "person; and all the pretences of his adversaries fall to the "ground." *—It has been further objected, that "the spirit of a man which is in him," means simply *the man himself:* and that therefore "the Spirit of God" means no more than *God himself.* But how much more natural, on this supposition, would it have been, to have said, directly and at once, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save *the man himself?* Even so, the things of God knoweth no one, save *God himself.*"—Why must we so often impute to the New Testament writers language so unnatural and affected;—and especially in cases where the simpler expressions would not only be equally correct in themselves, but free, at the same time, of any tendency to mislead?—But this is not all. Besides the strangeness of the phraseology on this hypothesis, the context, it may be observed, completely precludes any such interpretation. In verse 12th, the verse immediately following those which have been quoted, the apostle adds:

* Owen on the Spirit, Vol. I. page 142.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world"—(we might ask, by the way, is this phrase, too, to be understood as meaning *the world itself?*)—"We have not received the spirit of the world," that is the evil spirit, "but *the Spirit which is of* (or *from*) *God:*"* which is a designation of the Holy Spirit, evidently taken from the promise of Christ to his disciples before his departure from them:—"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,—even the Spirit of truth:"—"When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which *proceedeth from the Father*, he shall testify of me."† It is somewhat singular, that as the apostle opposes the Spirit of God to the spirit of the world, Jesus also makes a similar distinction:—"even the Spirit of truth, *whom the world cannot receive*, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

4.—The Psalmist acknowledges the *omnipresence* and *omniscience* of the Spirit of God, when he says, in the sublime language of the 139th Psalm, "Whither shall I go from thy presence? or whither shall I flee from THY SPIRIT?"—The apostle assigns to him an office, which, without these attributes, it is impossible that he can effectually execute: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."‡—He is also represented as having dictated to the Prophets their predictions of future events; which implies the possession of Divine *prescience*.—In

* τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ. † John xiv. 16. xv. 26. ‡ Rom. viii. 26, 27.

proposing the election of a new apostle, in the room of Judas Iscariot, Peter commenced his address to the hundred and twenty disciples, with these words: "Men and brethren, This scripture must needs have been fulfilled, *which the Holy Ghost*, by the mouth of David, *spake before*, concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus."*—The fact of which this is only a particular instance, is by the same apostle stated in a universal form, and in the most explicit and conclusive terms:—"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation;"—(more properly "that no prophecy of the Scripture is of *its own*, or of *self*-interpretation")†—"for the prophecy came not in old time *by the will of man;* but holy men of God spake as they were moved *by the Holy Ghost.*"

5.—The Divine *power* and *sovereignty* of the Holy Spirit are strikingly declared in a passage quoted on a former part of this subject, which ascribes to him the uncontrolled and almighty distribution of the whole variety of miraculous gifts:—1 Cor. xii. 11. "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."—That the SPIRIT does not, in these words, mean the *gifts communicated*, but the *Divine author* of these gifts, is as plain as the most explicit and discriminating language can make it. By what form of speech shall we distinguish an agent from his work, if they are not distinguished here?—The same distinction, between the power itself and the bestower of the power, is established by other passages. Thus when Christ says to his apostles, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;"—or, "Ye shall receive power, the Holy Ghost coming upon you;"‡—the *power* (by which is evidently meant all those supernatural endow-

* Acts i. 16. † See Note R. ‡ Acts i. 8.

ments which they were to receive, to qualify them for their work)—is distinguished from *the Holy Spirit himself;* of whose coming and influence it is represented as the effect:—and a similar observation might be made as to the language of Paul, when he speaks of "those things which Christ had wrought," by himself and others, "through mighty signs and wonders, through *the power of the Spirit of God.*" *—The *power* of the Holy Spirit might also be proved, from various other works which are ascribed to him, besides those that have now been mentioned.—Jesus speaks of himself as casting out demons *by the Spirit of God.* †—In his resurrection he is said to have been "*quickened by the Spirit,*"—the same Spirit by which, as inspiring Noah, he preached to the antediluvian world. ‡ And respecting the resurrection of his people, the apostle says: "If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, *by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*" §

6.—Eternal existence is ascribed by the apostle Paul, in express terms, to the Holy Spirit:—Heb. ix. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, *through the eternal Spirit,* offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"

On this expression,—"*the eternal Spirit*"—the Improved Version of the New Testament has the following singular note:—"The phrase, 'everlasting spirit,' is very unusual; but if "admitted as genuine, it must signify, that Christ offered "himself by Divine appointment!"—"*If admitted as genuine!*" There is not much of ingenuous candour, in retaining a phrase in the text, and throwing out an *inuendo* in the note, that is fitted to bring it into suspicion. It *is* admitted as genuine,

* Rom. xv. 18, 19. † Matth. xii. 28. ‡ 1 Peter iii. 18—20. § Rom. viii. 11.

on the very authority which the Editors hold in the highest repute, and profess to follow as their critical standard: nor have they themselves seen reason, in the present instance, to dissent from that authority.—"The phrase is *very unusual;* but, if admitted as genuine, *it must signify,* that Christ offered himself *by Divine appointment!*" Now, there is one question, which naturally suggests itself here:—Does assigning to the phrase "*through the eternal Spirit*" the signification of "*by Divine appointment*" render it *less unusual*—less dissimilar to the ordinary phraseology of Scripture—or *more so?*—Not *less,* certainly.—If the phrase itself be unusual, much more singular and anomalous is the interpretation affixed to it.—Yet this, we are told, "it *must* signify!" How strange is this assertion!—made in the face of all those passages, both in the Old Testament, and in the New, in which the Holy Spirit is represented as resting upon the Messiah, and as given to him without measure!—"It *must* signify!" Yes; but the *necessity* lies, not in the real difficulty of the case, but in the exigency of the Critic's and Commentator's argument;—an exigency which he must have felt very pinching, before he would venture on such an explanation.—The surest commentary on Christ's "offering himself to God, *through the eternal Spirit,*" is to be found in the words of Jehovah by the prophet Isaiah;—"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth:—*I have put my Spirit upon him;* he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.—He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." *

7.—I have already considered the argument from the words of my text; and shall now close this series of proofs, by shortly noticing one or two passages of a parallel description:—

* Isaiah xlii. 1, 4.

Rev. i. 4, 5. "Grace be unto you and peace, from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from *the seven Spirits which are before his throne:* and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth:"—2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and *the communion of the Holy Spirit* be with you all! Amen!"—In the former of these passages, "*the seven Spirits of God*" is evidently an emblematical expression for the Holy Spirit, significant of the fulness and sufficiency of his influences for the supply of the *seven churches* (and, by obviously intended inference, of *all* his churches) with all needful grace.—On the expression in the latter passage, "*the communion of the Holy Spirit,*" it has been said:—"This clause may imply a wish, "that those Christians might continue to partake in mira- "culous gifts and powers. But we have observed, that some- "times by the Spirit, or Holy Spirit, may be understood any "good things conducive to men's real happiness. In this "place, therefore, we may suppose to be hereby meant, a "participation of, and communion in, all the blessings of the "gospel, and all other needful good things."*—An opportunity will occur, in a future Discourse, of illustrating the true meaning of the phrase in question, "the *communion of the Holy Spirit.*" I only remark at present, on what singularly slender foundations men of the highest eminence do sometimes build their conclusions. Thus slender, certainly, is the ground on which it is affirmed, "that sometimes by the Spirit, or Holy Spirit, may be understood *any good things conducive to human happiness.*" In Matth. vii. 11. our Lord is related to have said—"If ye, then, being evil, know how to

* Lardner's First Postscript to his Letter on the Logos. Works, Vol. XI. p. 160.

give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give *good things* unto them that ask him?"—In Luke xi. 13. his words are, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give *the Holy Spirit* to them that ask him?"—In these two passsges, the ground of inference is indeed the same: but in the former, the inference itself is general; in the latter, it is particular. "*Good things*," in the former, is to be understood universally, of *all* that is good; for the premises clearly bear this extent of conclusion:—in the latter, a *particular good* is selected, and the conclusion, although it might have been universal, is limited to that good. To conclude, from the reasoning being of the same kind, that "*good things*" in the one, and "*the Holy Spirit*" in the other, are phrases of synonymous import, and, consequently, that the Holy Spirit may be understood, as we please, of *any thing whatever that can conduce to human happiness*,—may be very convenient, as affording a latitude of interpretation, serviceable on other occasions: but the conclusion is such as cannot be justified on any principle of sound criticism.—It should be recollected, that the two Evangelists are not reporting the same Discourse; but two similar Discourses, delivered at different times. When a speaker, then, on two distant occasions, happens to use the same argument, but in the one instance gives it its full scope of inference, while in the other, for whatever reason, his conclusion is purposely limited; are we, because the premises are the same, to identify the conclusions, and insist upon interpreting the terms of the particular one, as of equal extent with those of the universal?—Yet such is the principle of interpretation, on which the eminent critic referred to concludes that "by the Holy Spirit is meant," in Luke xi. 13. "any

good thing conducive to our real happiness;"*—and, by consequence, that when Paul, in the passage under consideration, wishes believers "the communion of the Holy Ghost," "we may suppose to be hereby meant a participation of, and "communion in, all the blessings of the gospel, and all other "needful good things."—I shall leave it to yourselves to judge, whether this is sufficient ground for setting aside the evidence of the Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, contained in this passage; and whether such passages do not contain prayers for blessing from the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, each of whom is virtually addressed, and each acknowledged as able to bless.

When such passages as our text, and the two on which I have now been commenting, are considered, it becomes more than probable, that in the threefold benediction, enjoined by Jehovah himself, to be pronounced on the people of Israel, by the priests under the law, there was a tacit reference to the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead:—"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee;—the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!"†—and also, that the same glorious doctrine is recognised in the solemn and impressive language of angelic adoration; "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! The whole earth is full of his glory."‡

* "Luke xi. 13. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto "your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit "to them that ask him?" which is parallel with Matth. vii. 11. "If ye, then, "being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more "will your Father who is in heaven give good things unto them that ask him?" "Whereby we may perceive, that by *the Holy Spirit* is meant, any good thing, "conducive to our real happiness."—Lardner's First Postscript to his Letter on the Logos—Works, Vol. XI. p. 145.

† Numb. vi. 24—26. ‡ Isaiah vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8.

Those who are at all acquainted with the subject I have now been discussing will perceive, that it is far from having been exhausted. Enough, however, has, I trust, been said, to establish the general point which it has been my object to prove—that the SPIRIT OF GOD, so often spoken of in the Scriptures, is a DIVINE PERSON.—Additional confirmation will be given to this important doctrine, from the part which he is represented as performing in the great scheme of human redemption, which will be illustrated in next Discourse.

Even from what has already been said, I cannot but anticipate your concurrence with me, when I say, that the man who can persuade himself that all those things which, we have seen, are affirmed respecting the Spirit of God, are to be understood of a power, or influence, an abstract quality, or a mode of operation, whatever astonishment and contempt he may profess to feel for the weak credulity, as he esteems it, of the simple believer in the mysteries of the orthodox faith, is himself vastly more credulous than, perhaps, he is aware, or, at any rate, than he would be disposed to acknowledge. Were I to enumerate the principles, which (if they would be consistent with themselves) they ought to hold, who profess to believe the Bible to be the word of God, and yet deny the doctrines of the Divinity and Atonement of Christ, and the Personality, and Deity, and Influence of the Holy Spirit, they would be found to imply a measure of credulity, certainly not inferior to that which they profess to scorn.

While I am thus firmly convinced, that the Scriptures are incapable of any fair and consistent explanation, without the admission of the doctrine of the Trinity, I entertain strong doubts about the correctness of the notion, commonly received, of what is called the *eternal generation* of the Son from the Father, and the *eternal procession* of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, *in the essence of Deity*. This, I have

long been disposed to think, is entering into the *mode* of the Divine subsistence, further than the Scriptures authorize us to do. My own conviction is, that the title, SON OF GOD, has no reference to *eternal generation* in the essence of Deity, but to the supernatural constitution of the Mediatorial person of Christ, as uniting in it the divine and human natures,—a constitution resulting from "the power of the Highest," and giving the designation a sense entirely peculiar to himself:—and, with regard to the *procession* of the Holy Spirit, it appears to me, in the only text usually quoted in proof of its being eternal in the essence of the Godhead,* to mean no more than the mission of the Spirit, from the exalted Son himself, or from the Father in the Son's name, to effect his appropriate functions in the plan of redeeming grace.—A difference of sentiment, however, exists on these points, amongst those who hold the essential articles of the Supreme Divinity of the Son and of the Spirit. The discussion of them, therefore, however important I may deem it in some of its bearings on the great questions before us, yet does not, properly and directly, pertain to my present subject. While engaged in defending the vital doctrines of God's word against those who deny and oppose them, I should be sorry to involve myself in controversy with any by whom they are maintained, respecting the meaning of particular titles and phrases. I shall only, therefore, say, that the sum of what we are taught in the Scriptures seems to me to be this:—that, while the three persons have existed from eternity, equal, and mutually independent, in the Divine unity, in a manner which it is vain for us to attempt to comprehend;—it has pleased this one Jehovah,—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—in revealing to mankind the scheme of redeeming mercy, to inform us, that, while each

* John xv. 16.

acts his part voluntarily, (the three persons being one in counsel by the same necessity which unites them in essence,) yet the Son is to be considered as sent by the Father, and the Spirit as sent by the Father and the Son:—the Father in the constitution of the plan, as it has been disclosed to us, *representing* the Godhead.

The usual doxology of the English Church, I conclude with remarking, seems, from all that has been said, to be in perfect consonance with the decisions of the word of God, and with the spirit of that worship which it prescribes and exemplifies.—In this short, but solemn, ascription of praise, let us, with one heart and one soul, unite:—"GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY GHOST, AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE! AMEN!"

DISCOURSE XI.

ON THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ROM. viii. 9.

"*Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*"

THE influences of the Spirit of God, whose Personality and Divinity it was the object of last Discourse to establish, are usually divided into two kinds,—*common*, and *extraordinary*.

He was the Author of inspiration in the Old Testament prophets;—for "the prophecy came not, in old time, by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*—It was he, too, that inspired the apostles and prophets of the New Testament church; imparting to them a complete and infallible knowledge of those parts of the Divine will, which it was the gracious purpose of God to communicate to mankind. And he was also the immediate author of all those "spiritual gifts," those miraculous endowments, in all their rich variety, which were bestowed on so many of the disciples of Christ, in primitive times. "To one was given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit: to another faith, by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers

* 2 Pet. i. 21.

kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:—all these wrought that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally, as he would."*

It is not of these that the apostle speak in our text. For neither, on the one hand, were these essential to a man's being Christ's; nor, on the other, did they certainly prove to be his the person who possessed them. "Many," says Christ himself, "shall say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."†—Balaam, the son of Bosor, who "loved the wages of unrighteousness," and who taught Balak how to seduce the Israelites into sin, possessed, at times at least, the spirit of prophecy. To Judas, "the son of perdition," we have no reason to doubt, "the devils were subject through the name of Jesus," as well as to the other eleven apostles. Nor does Paul make a *mere* supposition, which could never be realized in fact,—when he speaks of a man's possessing these supernatural gifts, even in the most eminent degree, and yet being destitute of that *love*, which is the most essential and comprehensive principle of the Christian character:—"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing."‡—That such, then, was, in various instances, the fact,—that persons did possess miraculous gifts, who were destitute of the grace of God, and of spiritual life, there can hardly, I should think, be a doubt.—Of the difficulty which the fact seems to

* 1 Cor. xii. 7—11. † Matth. vii. 22, 23. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.

involve, the simplest ground of explanation, perhaps, lies in the obvious distinction between *the witness*, and *the testimony which he delivers*. The character of the witness may be reprobate, while his testimony is important truth. Now, miracles were attestations, on the part of God, not of the moral excellence of the prophet who delivered his message, but of the truth of the message itself;—evidences, not of character, but of commission. And whatever incongruity there may appear to us, in the particular case of which I now speak, between the instrument employed and the nature of his work; yet, on the ground of the distinction stated, we are at no loss to conceive how God should set his seal to the testimony, while the witness himself, who delivered it, was disapproved and rejected.

While the "Spirit of Christ," in our text, cannot, for the reasons which have been assigned, signify miraculous powers; neither, I would further observe, can it be understood as meaning (according to a sense in which we sometimes use the word *spirit*) the *disposition*, or *mind* of Christ;—those holy tempers of soul which he possessed and exemplified.—Such holy tempers are elsewhere denominated "the *fruits of the Spirit*:"* and the sense in which the word *Spirit* is used, both in the preceding and subsequent context, completely precludes any such interpretation.†

It is of the ordinary gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, as the true and unequivocal evidences of a man's belonging to Christ, that I purpose, from this text, to treat:—a subject, certainly, which, to every one who duly considers the weight and solemnity of the declaration which the text contains, must appear of pre-eminent importance.

The text would naturally lead me to an illustration of the

* Gal. v. 22.

† See the Context, from the beginning of the chapter to the 16th verse.

three following topics:—how believers may be said to "have," or to possess, the Spirit of Christ:—the various influences of this Spirit, and the experienced and visible effects thence resulting as the evidence of such possession:—and the necessity of the possession of the Spirit, thus indicated, as a proof of their belonging to Christ.

In the present discourse, however, it is my intention to confine myself to the first operation of the Spirit;—that operation by which he "opens the heart" to the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus, and commences the Divine life in the soul:—his agency in what the Scriptures warrant us to denominate *regeneration*. All his subsequent influence is only a continued exercise of the same power, by which he prepares and takes possession of his temple.—By selecting, in the first instance, a single point, as the subject of proof, the argument will, I think, possess a greater measure of compactness and unity. And it must, at the same time, be obvious to every one, that if this leading point is ascertained, the general question is settled. If, from Scripture, and other legitimate sources of evidence, we can establish the reality, and the necessity, of the direct energy of the Holy Spirit, in producing, by the faith of the gospel, the *commencement* of the Divine life; there will be little difficulty in procuring assent to the inference, that the same energy must maintain and carry it on in perfection.—The satisfactory establishment of this one point, will clear the way for the remainder of the discussion, will divest it, in some measure, of its argumentative form, and impart to it more of the nature of illustration.

When considered in reference to the commencement of the Divine life in the soul, the declaration, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," may be understood as expressing the same important truth, which our Lord himself so emphatically declared to Nicodemus:—"Verily,

verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

It is my intention, with the supplicated aid of that Spirit, whose work I have undertaken to defend, to *state what appears to be the doctrine of the Scriptures, with regard to the necessity of Divine influence in regeneration*, and to *vindicate the doctrine from some leading objections.*

In the one Godhead, although subsisting in three persons, there has been, from eternity, *infinite knowledge*, and consequently perfect and invariable *unity of mind and counsel.* We are not to imagine any sort of distinction to exist, such as admits of the communication, from one to another, of any quality which was not possessed before. As to *knowledge*, for example, it belongs alike, in infinite perfection, to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as one God; and has so belonged from eternity, without the possibility either of increase or of diminution. It cannot, in strict propriety, be said, respecting any thought, or intention, that it ever *entered* the Divine mind: —for *ntrance* supposes a period preceding, when it was not there. Nor was any thought, or intention, ever present to the Father, that was not equally present to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. The thoughts of one are the thoughts of all;—the designs of one the designs of all;—underived—uncommunicated;—the thoughts and designs of THE GODHEAD.

In the scheme of our redemption, however, as was hinted towards the conclusion of the preceding Discourse, the three persons in this one Godhead are represented as performing, each his appropriate part of that glorious work, in the eternal design of which they were necessarily one.—The Father may be considered, in the Scripture exhibition of it, as *representing the Godhead*:—so that when *He* is said to be glorified by the

* John iii. 3, 5, 6.

work of the Son, it is *the Godhead* that is glorified; "glory to God in the highest," as resulting from the voluntary mediation of Christ, being glory to the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.—It is the peculiar work of the Son, by his appearance in our nature and substitution in our room, to render it consistent with *the Divine glory*, that is, with the glory of th Godhead, to pardon and to bless the guilty children of men. —The displeasure of the Father against sin, to which sinners stand exposed, is the displeasure of the Godhead:—and the reconciliation of the Father is the reconciliation of the Godhead.—And this may serve to account for the fact, that in Scripture many things, especially as to the bestowment of the blessings of salvation, are represented, indiscriminately, as done alike by the Father, by the Son, and by the Holy Spirit.

The ordinary distinction, however, pervades the account which is given in the Scriptures of this wonderful scheme.— The Father appears, as sending, or commissioning, the Son: —the Son, as coming in the likeness of sinful flesh, and finishing his work of atonement on the cross:—and, the Father having declared his approbation of this finished work,—his acceptance of this atoning sacrifice, by raising the man Christ Jesus from the grave, and exalting him to glory;—then comes the appropriate work of the Spirit, who is sent by the Father, in the name, and for the sake of the Son, with the express view of giving effect, in the souls of men, to the work of salvation which the Son had finished;—or, which is much the same thing, is sent by the Son himself, in the exercise of that power, with which, as Mediator, he is invested.

The person and work of Christ are the grand subjects of the gospel testimony:—that testimony being simply the declaration of what he is, and of what he hath done, and of the Divine satisfaction in his work;—accompanied with a proclamation of free pardon, and a promise of eternal life, to

all who, renouncing their proud rebellion, and submitting to unconditional mercy, are willing to receive these blessings as "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The great work of the Holy Spirit is to *bear testimony to Christ.*—He did so by all those supernatural gifts and powers, of which he was the author, "in the beginning of the gospel;" —and he did so then, and continues to do so now, by his gracious influence on the minds of men.—The work of Christ, and the work of the Spirit, are mutually necessary to each other's efficacy, and are thus both alike indispensable to the salvation of the sinner. Without the work of Christ, the Spirit would want the *means*, or *instrument* of his operation; and without the work of the Spirit, these means would remain inefficacious and fruitless. Without the work of Christ, there would not have been, for any sinner, a foundation of hope towards God;—without the work of the Spirit, no sinner would have been induced to build on this foundation. Christ has opened the way of access to God;—the Spirit brings sinners to God, in the way which Christ has opened.

I had occasion formerly to notice the double design of the gospel—the restoration of men to the *favour* of God, and, at the same time, to his *image;—forgiveness of sin*, and *renovation of heart.*—Both of these blessings, which, when understood in their full extent, comprehend the whole of salvation, are inseparably connected with the faith of the gospel testimony.— Of the former of these blessings,—justification from the guilt of sin,—the truth believed, or rather Jesus Christ, who is the subject of that truth, is the *ground;*—while the belief of that truth, or faith in Jesus Christ, is the *medium* of interest.—As to the latter blessing,—the renovation of the heart, or sanctification,—the same truth is the means by which this blessed effect is produced: and the knowledge and belief of this truth are essential to its renewing influence; for it cannot be sup-

posed to have any truly gracious or saving efficacy, except as it is understood and believed.

Here, then, commences the work of the Spirit:—here is his first operation:—the *spiritual illumination of the understanding, in order to the conversion of the heart.*

Let me illustrate this part of my subject, from the words of the apostle in 1 Cor. ii. 14. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The "*natural,*" or *animal,* or *sensual man,** cannot here mean merely the *sensualist,*—the man who immerses himself in the gratifications of animal appetite,—as opposed, either to the sober man, or to the man who devotes himself to the cultivation of his mind, in the pursuits of science and philosophy.—This is evident, on the three following grounds:—*In the first place,* it stands, as a general designation, in distinction from the "spiritual man," and therefore must be considered as comprehending all who are *not spiritual,* in the sense in which this appellation is generally used by the apostle Paul. And no one who is even superficially acquainted with his phraseology can fail to know, that he designs to express by it much more than either *sober* or *intellectual,* in opposition to *sensual,* in the ordinary gross acceptation of that epithet.—*Secondly,* The matter of fact is, that what is said in this verse applies with equal, if not superior, emphasis, to the "wise and prudent" of this world,—to the men of science and philosophy,—than even to the sensualist. From the former has proceeded a greater portion of pointed, and scornful, and bitter derision, against what the apostle here denominates "the things of the Spirit of God," than from the latter. It has been by such men,

* ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος.

generally speaking, above all others, that these things have been disdained, and vilified, and pronounced *foolishness.*—*Thirdly,* Notice the agreement of this observation with what the apostle had said before, in this very epistle, respecting those who "*sought after wisdom:*"—"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign; and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto us who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."*—Have we not, in these words, an express declaration, by the writer himself, to what description of men he especially referred, when he said, in the text on which I am now commenting, "The *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for *they are foolishness unto him?*"—that he meant the philosopher as much at least as the sensualist?—that, in short, he meant all those who remained under the influence of such principles only as exist in the animal and rational nature of man, independently of the renewing operation of the grace or Spirit of God?

By "the things of the Spirit of God," we must understand *the truths of the gospel;* those doctrines which were "revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."—Respecting

* 1 Cor. i. 18—24.

these it is here affirmed, that "the natural man *receiveth them not;*—that they are *foolishness* to him; that he *cannot know them.*"

To the right understanding of the passage, and of the true nature of that operation of the Spirit of which it affirms the necessity,—it is of great consequence to ascertain the proper meaning of the last of these expressions—"*neither can he* KNOW *them.*" What is the nature of this knowledge?—Now to this question the passage itself furnishes an immediate and satisfactory answer. To "*know them,*" is, obviously, to know them *in such a way that they no longer appear foolishness:*—and this implies nothing less, than discerning them to be, what they really are, "*the wisdom of God;*"—nothing less than a perception of their *truth, excellence,* and *glory.* While they appeared foolishness, they were *not received:*—whenever they are thus known, thus discerned, they *are* received. In the order of nature, the discernment must precede the reception;—yet between the one and the other there is no imaginable interval of time. The reception might rather be said to *accompany* the discernment, than to follow it;—to be almost, indeed, involved in its very nature.

Now it is to this *spiritual discernment* of the things of God, in their truth, and excellence, and glory, that the enlightening influence of the Divine Spirit is declared to be necessary.—There is a kind of knowledge which any natural man *may* possess without the Spirit of God;—nay which every natural man who hears the gospel *must* possess, *in order to his accounting it foolishness;*—a kind of knowledge, without which he cannot, in the nature of things, be guilty of *disbelieving, rejecting, scorning,* or *hating* it. All these exercises of mind imply *knowledge;*—they suppose the capacity of understanding *the meaning* of the several propositions which are included in the gospel testimony. These propositions are expressed in

terms abundantly plain, and which any man of ordinary intellect is perfectly capable of comprehending.—No man, for instance, is at a loss to know what we *mean*, when we tell him, that he has broken the law of God;—that he is consequently condemned by the sentence of that law; that this sentence he can himself do nothing to avert;—that if he escapes and is pardoned, it cannot be on the ground of any works of righteousness on his part, but by an act of free and sovereign mercy on the part of God, through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ; in whom he must believe, in order to his being thus saved from merited destruction.—All this is readily enough understood; and in proportion as it is understood, it is hated by the carnal mind. Indeed the difference between discerning the truth and excellence of a proposition, and merely understanding its meaning, is sufficiently obvious.—It cannot be the latter of these two kinds of knowledge that is intended in the verse:—because, if no man could possess *this* knowledge without spiritual illumination, no man, unless spiritually enlightened, could be guilty of unbelief, or hatred of the truth.—It must, therefore, mean such knowledge as has been described;—a perception, not merely of the *meaning* of gospel truths, but of their wisdom, and excellence, their consistency, beauty, and suitableness.

This, then, is what the apostle means by *spiritual discernment*:—and it is most clearly and emphatically affirmed to be the effect of the illuminating influence of the Spirit of God:—"The natural man *receiveth not* the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither *can he know them*, because they are *spiritually discerned*."—This spiritual discernment, as has been already noticed, is immediately followed by the *reception* of the truth; which is the same thing as the *faith* of the gospel. And, accordingly, the faith of the gospel, in exact conformity with the representation which has

now been given, is ascribed, in the plainest terms, to *divine influence.* "No man can come to me," said Jesus himself, "except the Father who hath sent me draw him. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me:" and afterwards, in the same conversation with the Jews:—"Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father."*—"By grace are ye saved, through faith;" says the apostle to the Ephesians, "and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God:" and again, to the Phillipians; "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"—"For unto you it is given, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." †

These passages teach us, that the commencement of the "good work," as the apostle terms it, takes place at the time, when the sinner, by illumination from above, *discerns* and *receives* the truth.—It is then that he is *born again.* And, with the same plainness and decision, his *regeneration* is described as the work of God;—the work of the Holy Spirit;—and, at the same time, as effected *by means* of the truth. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven:" "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost:" "To as many as received him, to them gave he power (right or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the

* John vi. 44, 45, 65. † Eph. ii. 8. Phil. i. 6, 29.

will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:" "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures:" "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever:—and this is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you."*

This circumstance may readily account for the fact, that regeneration is sometimes ascribed to *God*, and the *Spirit of God*, and at other times to *the truth*. Such passages are perfectly consistent with each other. They intimate the necessity, in order to the effect being produced, of the concurrence of the truth and the influence of the Spirit: of the truth as the *means*, and the Spirit as the *agent*. The one class of passages do not mean, that the truth produces the effect without the Spirit; nor the other, that the Spirit produces it without the truth. It is quite natural to expect, in such a case, that the effect should sometimes be traced to the efficient agent; and at other times, to the necessary and invariable means of that agent's operation.

It is by no means intended to affirm, that the word of God, by itself, unaccompanied with the influence of the Spirit, produces *no effects whatever*. There *are* effects which may be, and which often are, produced by *natural knowledge*; that is, by the mere acquaintance with the *meaning*, and with some particulars of the *evidence*, of what is testified:—such effects, for instance, as alarm of conscience, and the perturbations of foreboding fear,—as in the case of Felix;†—partial reformation of conduct, accompanied with delusive self-complacency,—as in the case of Herod;‡ and the external semblance of some of the Christian virtues,—as in the case of multitudes, who, with melancholy inconsistency, make it evident, by other

* John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5. John i. 12, 13. James i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23, 25.
† Acts xxiv. 24—26. ‡ Mark vi. 20.

parts of their conduct, that they are destitute of the "power of godliness."—But the spiritual illumination of which I have before spoken, is accompanied with, or rather includes in it, the production of what may be termed a *spiritual taste;* a perception and consequent relish of the beauty and excellence of the object of knowledge revealed in the gospel. The sinner, when spiritually enlightened, discerns wisdom,—heavenly wisdom, in what before he accounted foolishness;—consummate propriety in what formerly offended and disgusted him;—and that Saviour to be "fairer than the children of men," "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely," who before appeared in his eyes, as "a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, no beauty, why he should be desired."—This change of sentiments and feelings, we affirm, is represented in the Scriptures, as the effect of Divine influence;—of the influence of the Spirit of God.

The passages before quoted might be considered as sufficiently decisive on this point.—I would further remark, however, that it is strongly confirmed by those figures which are employed to represent the nature and magnitude of the change which takes place, when a sinner "receives the love of the truth that he may be saved."—This change is represented as a *new birth*, a *resurrection from the dead*, a *new creation*.—Of the first of these I have already quoted examples. Of the second and third the following are instances:—"And (that ye may know) what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe; according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead:"—"And you (hath he quickened) who were dead in trespasses and sins:"—"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ:"—"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, to

which God hath before ordained us, that we should walk in them:"—"Wherefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;—old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."*

It is very evident, that such figures as these must express a change, not external, superficial, and partial, but internal, radical, and total:—a change of mind, of heart, and of life;—of views, of principles, and of conduct.—And it is also not less evident, that, as the things in nature to which the change is compared, require Divine energy for their accomplishment, so must the change itself. This, indeed, in several of the passages quoted, is most pointedly affirmed.

The whole of such language proceeds on the supposition of the deep and radical corruption of the human heart; that corruption which, although it assumes a vast variety of aspects, (being modified, in its influence on the characters of men, by an inconceivable diversity of circumstances,) is yet, in its general nature, the same, and operates universally in hostility to that truth, which abases to the dust the pride of man, and which "crucifies the flesh, with its affections and lusts."

Into any illustration or proof of this important doctrine, it cannot be expected that I should at present enter.—The apostle Paul, it may in general be observed, has, in the seventh verse of this chapter, summed up in one expression all the varieties of human corruption:—"*The carnal mind is* ENMITY AGAINST GOD."—The whole context shows, that by the carnal mind, or mind of the flesh, he means the mind of man previously to his being "*renewed in the spirit of his mind.*" In the first verse of the chapter, "those who are *in Christ Jesus*" are characterized as "walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" and as this is what distinguishes them from others,

* Eph. i. 19, 20. ii. 1, 4, 5, 10. 2 Cor v. 17.

all others must be considered as "walking after the flesh," and "minding the things of the flesh."—This is the distinction which pervades the whole passage;—the distinction between the *renewed* and the *unrenewed*,—those who *have*, and those who *have not* the Spirit of Christ,—those who *are after the Spirit*, and those who *are after the flesh*.—Of the "lusts of the flesh and of the mind," which corrupt nature is prone to gratify, there is a prodigious diversity; and from this diversity arises the variety that appears in the external characters of ungodly and worldly men. But the apostle, without entering into this variety, divides mankind at once into two classes, determines every one to be "after the flesh," who is *not* "after the Spirit;"—and all who are after the flesh to be under the prevailing dominion of "*enmity against God*." This enmity is the sum of man's depravity; the fountain of all the polluted streams of human character; the germ of the poison-tree; the great principle and concentrated essence of all evil.

From this view of human corruption arises an obvious, but cogent argument, for the necessity of Divine influence, to change the heart;—I mean, the contradiction which seems to be involved in the supposition of self-change. How can a principle of evil convert itself into a principle of good? How can enmity ever change itself into love? How can hatred of God, of its own accord, choose to love God?—Is not this to suppose a principle operating in diametrical opposition to its proper nature, and invariable tendency?

In answer to this it may be said, that certain views and considerations are presented to the mind, which are, in their nature, fitted to subdue enmity, and to inspire love;—and that this is quite sufficient to account for the change in question.

Let us examine this a little.

The principle upon which the answer proceeds, obviously

is, that the enmity of which I have been speaking has its source in *ignorance;* and that it requires only a just exhibition of the perfections of the Divine character, to make the Being who possesses these perfections the object of love.—And so, in general, those persons against whom chiefly I now reason, are accustomed to express themselves.—The soundness of the principle, however, is more than questionable. Observe respecting it,

1*st*, When the apostle speaks of "*enmity against God*," he must mean, if he means any thing that is evil, enmity against *his true character.*—If it were otherwise,—if the enmity arose from *false* views of God, and required only the correction of these to make it give place to love, it would not be enmity against God at all. It would be enmity against that which God *is not.* It would, therefore, in fact, be of the nature of *love to God.* For hatred of what God *is not*, is negative or hypothetical love of what God *is;*—a just exhibition of the Divine character to the mind being all that is requisite to call it into exercise in a direct and positive state. This certainly was not what Paul meant to express. Such, assuredly, were not his views of the tendencies and likings of human nature.

2*dly*, On this supposition, the only guilt would lie in the *ignorance* by which the enmity had been occasioned. But *simple ignorance*,—that is, ignorance considered *in itself*, as a deficiency purely intellectual, unconnected with the state of the will and of the heart, and uninfluenced by it, cannot be justly conceived to involve in it any guilt at all. It has nothing in it of the nature of moral turpitude. Ignorance is criminal, only in as far as it is *voluntary*, and connected with *disposition.*

3*dly*, In exact accordance with these remarks, is the fact, that, in the Scriptures, ignorance is so far from being represented as the origin and cause of the enmity, that the case is

reversed; the enmity being pointedly declared to be the cause of the ignorance. The gross darkness, and idolatrous superstition of the heathen world, are traced immediately to this source by the inspired apostle of the Gentiles:—"*They did not like*," says he, "*to retain God in their knowledge*:"*—And in another place he speaks of them as "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, *through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness* (more properly *hardness* or *callousness* †) *of their hearts*."‡—That which is the case with reference to God himself, is the case also with regard to his gospel;—which, indeed, is the clearest and fullest manifestation of his true character:—"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and that men *loved darkness rather than light*, because their deeds were evil:"—"Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye *cannot hear* (that is, *cannot bear*) *my word*:"—"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye, therefore, hear them not, *because ye are not of God*."§ In these and other passages, *aversion of heart* is clearly represented as the *source of ignorance*. From which it inevitably follows, that something else than *mere* knowledge, that is, than a mere apprehension of the *meaning* of gospel doctrines, is necessary to its removal. I have accordingly observed already, that the spiritual illumination for the necessity of which I contend, includes in it the production of a *spiritual taste*, by which the excellences of the character and truth of God are discerned and relished:—and that this constitutes the difference between *natural* and *spiritual knowledge*. The eye of the man who possesses taste and sensibility, does not, as a mere optical instrument, admit the landscape more fully, or more correctly, than the eye of him who is entirely destitute of these qualities. But the latter

* Rom. i. 28. † πώρωσιν. ‡ Eph. iv. 18.
§ John iii. 19. viii. 43, 47.

is blind to the beauties and sublimities of the scene. He perceives them not; he feels them not: while the former catches every feature of the sublime and the beautiful, and is fixed in admiration and delight. Somewhat akin to this is the difference which exists, between him who merely knows that, according to the Scriptures, God is possessed of certain attributes, and that these Scriptures contain particular doctrines, and the man who, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, discerns, by a kind of new and spiritual sense, the glory and the loveliness of these attributes, the truth, and excellence, and fitness of these doctrines.

4thly, This distinction is fully sufficient to account for what seems to be clearly affirmed in Scripture,—that *all* who are enlightened of God do actually receive the truth in the love of it; that *all who know, believe*. That such is the fact, the following words of Christ himself, before referred to, are sufficient to determine:—"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. *Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*"* —On the same principle, we can at once perceive the reason, why *knowledge* is at times used as if it were synonymous with *faith*: for spiritual knowledge, being a discernment of the truth and excellence of gospel doctrine, might very safely and properly be considered as implying, because it is of necessity accompanied by, faith and approbation. *Perceiving a proposition to be true*, if it be not precisely a convertible expression for *belief* or *faith*, is at any rate so inseparably accompanied by it, that we cannot for a moment imagine the one to exist without the other: and the same is obviously the case, with the *perception of excellence*, and the sentiment of *approbation*.

It may, perhaps, be objected to the view I am now giving

* John vi. 45.

of the necessity of the inward energy of the Holy Spirit to the conversion of the sinner, that it is *disparaging to the word of God*, implying, as it does, its inadequacy, by its own independent operation, for the accomplishment of this effect.

This objection has sometimes been urged by persons who hold very different views of the foundation of hope revealed in the gospel, from those whose sentiments I have chiefly in view in these discourses. The following observations may suffice to evince its fallacy:

In the first place: We cannot justly be considered as disparaging the word of God, when we give it, in this matter, *the place which it assigns to itself.* If the Scriptures represent the gospel as a *means* or *instrument*, we do not underrate its value or its power, when we view it, and speak of it in this light.

2dly, The word is not disparaged when, as an instrument, it is acknowledged to be eminently *fitted for its end.* That cannot be considered as disparaged, which is represented as fully answering the purpose for which it is intended. It is wrong, indeed, in point of accuracy of expression, to speak of the word of God as *a dead letter.* For "the word of God is *quick* (that is, *living*) and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* Yet there is no inconsistency in saying, that this view of the Divine word assumes, or supposes, the accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit. The word of God is "the sword of the Spirit." And we no more derogate from the excellence and efficacy of the word, when we affirm that it cannot *pierce*, and *divide*, and *lay open*, except as used by the power of the Spirit, than we should detract from the excellence of the best tempered sabre, by

* Heb. iv. 12.

saying, that it can do no execution, unless wielded by the arm and prowess of the warrior.

3*dly*, The disparagement attaches, not to the word of God, but to the nature of man. That *enmity* of which I formerly spoke, has, on many occasions, shown itself to be capable of resisting the most convincing arguments, the most affecting considerations, and the best adapted means. Certainly no considerations can be conceived more powerfully persuasive, none more admirably fitted for subduing to submission and to grateful affection the rebellious heart of man, than the exhibition given by the gospel of the love and grace of the Godhead, in the mediation of Jesus Christ. This is, in every view, inconceivably more touching, and melting, and overpowering to the heart, than the views of the gospel (if according to these views it merited the name) which are held by our Unitarian opponents. And when we admit that even this will not, of itself, unaccompanied by Divine energy, overcome the obduracy of the will and affections of unregenerate men, we throw no disparaging reflection on the gospel of God; but we freely acknowledge, that it bears hard (alas! that it should be so justly hard!) on the nature which we possess in our fallen state.

In connexion with this part of my subject, may be noticed the sentiment of those, who, while they admit that God is the author of the change which takes place in regeneration, deny that he effects it by any direct inward influence; affirming that he only places men in circumstances which tend to produce the change; bringing them under the outward ministration of the gospel, and at the same time arranging incidents in providence, in such a manner as to aid and ensure its efficacy. The remarks which have just been made with regard to the word of God, as a means or instrument, are obviously applicable, in all their force, to the arrangements of

his providence. It is at once admitted, that God, in infinite wisdom, *does* thus arrange providential occurrences, and all outward means, for the accomplishment of his gracious design. But there is a wide difference between the admission of this, and granting the sufficiency of these means to work out the effect by their own unassisted influence.

The idea of the Spirit of God converting the sinner *without means*, and particularly *without the word*, is an idea to which the Scriptures give no countenance;—an idea, which opens a wide door to all the extravagances of wild enthusiasm. We have, I apprehend, sufficient warrant in the Bible, for refusing to acknowledge any man as a subject of the regenerating power of the Spirit, however high his pretensions to Divine communications may be, who is ignorant of the great truths made known in the gospel. But to every candid mind it must be evident, that the expressions of Scripture which have been already quoted, imply much more, on the part of God, than the mere exhibition of means, and arrangement of circumstances. And that more than this is necessary to the production of the effect, while it is clearly declared in these expressions, is abundantly confirmed by many striking facts in the history and experience of mankind. To ancient Israel God gave his "lively oracles:"—and every motive that could awaken their fears, or interest their desires,—every motive contained in the promises and the threatenings, the favours and the judgments of God,—was employed, with reiterated and increasing vehemence, to impress his truth upon their minds, and give it a permanent influence in their hearts:—yet they continued a "stubborn and rebellious generation;" to whom Moses said, with melancholy truth, after all the kindness they had experienced, and all the discipline they had endured,—and in the midst of the most propitious external circumstances;—"The Lord

hath not given you a heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, unto this day."—Still more striking is the fact, at the period when the Messiah himself made his appearance amongst them. He set before them the clearest and most abundant evidences of his Divine mission. He accompanied these with an uninterrupted display of the most unwearied benevolence, and of every other possible excellence of character.—No expectation could be more reasonable than that of the husbandman in the parable, "They will reverence my Son." Yet what was the mournful fact? "When the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir: come let us kill him, and let us seize on the inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him."*—Instead of yielding to evidence, the irritation and violence of the Jews against the truth increased, in exact proportion as the proofs of it were multiplied;—a circumstance for which it is not difficult, on the ordinary principles of human nature, satisfactorily to account. When any doctrine is the object of dislike, the struggle between the conviction which undeniable evidence forces upon the judgment, and the rooted aversion which still remains in the heart, must of necessity become, in such circumstances, always the more violent. In the case of the Jews, the expressions and acts of rage and madness frequently indicated the fearful tempest of conflicting sentiments and passions, which, from this cause, was agitating and tormenting their bosoms. Nor, although accompanied with some peculiarities, is the case of the Jews, in the general principle of it, by any means a solitary one. It is, I believe, the case of by far the greater number of those who reject the gospel

* Matth. xxi. 38, 39.

amongst ourselves. "The light still shineth in darkness, and the darkness admitteth it not."

Further:—It is a matter of fact in daily observation, that circumstances which appear, in every respect, the most favourable that could be desired, frequently fail of any salutary effect, to the great disappointment and grief of those who are anxious about the result in behalf of their friends;—while, in other instances, circumstances much less promising are attended with converting efficacy. It is also as frequently observable, that the very same circumstances, as far as human discernment can discover, prove effectual in the conviction and conversion of one, while another remains entirely unaffected by them, or is even hardened in infidelity and sin.

Such facts, which are without number, immediately suggest certain inquiries:—What is the cause of this remarkable diversity of effect?—Does it proceed from better previous dispositions in one than in another? or (which in effect, indeed, is much the same) from the better improvement, on the part of one than of another, of that grace which is supposed to be common to all?

In reply to these questions I would simply observe, that every theory which militates against a leading and characteristic feature of the gospel, must be a false theory. Now, throughout the Scriptures, the scheme of salvation is uniformly represented as having been purposely so constituted as to "*hide pride from man.*" The language of the gospel is, "He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord:"—"Where is boasting? It is excluded."—The whole plan, then, in all its parts, must, in this respect, be consistent with itself. The design of abasing human pride, and precluding self-glorying, must be answered throughout. It is not enough that

"boasting" be "excluded" in one quarter, while ground is retained for it in another. It is not enough, for example, that this exclusion be recognised only in the *foundation of hope*, or *meritorious ground of acceptance.* Any hypothesis which, while it professes to do this, places, at the same time, *in the sinner himself* who has been led to build on this foundation, and has been "renewed in the spirit of his mind," the *reason of the difference* between him and others, militates directly against this characteristic feature of the gospel. For in order to the effectual exclusion of boasting, it is just as necessary that the *cause of difference* should not be in us, as that the *ground of hope* should not be in us.—It alters not the case to say, "I still owe the difference to grace; because without communicated grace the difference could never have existed." For, if this grace is imparted to me, *in common with others*, who fail to improve it; then the difference between them and me is not owing to the grace (for with respect to it we are supposed on a level), but evidently to my superior improvement of the grace. And *in the disposition so to improve it, I have "whereof to glory."*

But the whole of this doctrine, it may now be said, proceeds upon the supposition of man's inability of himself to believe the gospel, and turn unto God. And such inability, it may be alleged, cannot exist, because it destroys human accountableness.

This objection is founded in a double mistake:—

In the first place: It is founded in a mistake as to the *nature* of the inability in question.—This inability—(the observation is trite, but ought never to be forgotten)—is entirely of a *moral* kind. It does not at all consist in any want of *natural powers and capacities:*—for were there a want of these, certainly men would not be "*without excuse.*" It consists in *aversion of heart;* in *disinclination* to what is truly

good; in *dislike* to "the things of the Spirit of God."—Our Lord confirms, what reason irresistibly dictates, that men could not be responsible, as sinners and unbelievers, if they wanted natural faculties, and capacities for knowledge,—when, in reply to the self-confident question of the Pharisees, "Are we blind also?" he assures them, "*If ye were blind ye should have no sin:* but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth:"*—and when, speaking of the hatred and rejection which he had experienced from his countrymen in general, he says to his disciples, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen, and hated both me and my Father."†—The latter of these two passages teaches us besides, that to render men "without excuse," there must not only be the possession of natural powers and capacities, but also *opportunities of knowledge*, and *adequate means of conviction.* In the case to which our Lord refers, all these were enjoyed:—and the unbelief of the Jews, in the midst of their high advantages, he traces at once to the state of their hearts,—to their *hatred* of himself and of his Father.—His language to them on another occasion proceeds on the same principle: "Ye *will not* come to me, that ye might have life:—I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you:"‡—and it is also distinctly recognised in his words to Nicodemus, formerly quoted: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and that men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil: for every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light,

* John ix. 41. † John xv. 22, 24.

‡ John v. 40, 42.

lest his deeds should be reproved."*—"This kind of "inability is evidently wilful and vicious, and therefore "culpable and inexcusable. Every man's conscience, upon "the least reflection, must tell him so; and if ever he "come to be duly sensible of it, and humbled on that "account, he will be so far from excusing himself on the score "of such inability, that he will confess it as his guilt, take "the blame entirely to himself, justify God and his holy law, "and implore the influences of his Holy Spirit, to create a "clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him."†—Indeed, to vindicate men on the plea of inability of *this* description, is to excuse them on account of that which, instead of being an alleviation of their criminality, itself constitutes the very essence of all their guilt.

2*dly*, Supposing the inability of man to be of this description, and to be, consequently, neither excusable in itself, nor any excuse for unbelief and rejection of the gospel; the difference produced by the grace of the Spirit of God, when he makes any one a partaker of salvation, *leaves the case of others unaltered.* The objection proceeds on the supposition, that there exists some kind of *claim*, on the part of the guilty, for the exercise of Divine clemency. But such a supposition is, on no account, and in no degree, admissible. Persons who persist in rebellion, do not surely become more excusable than they were before, because other rebels have been induced to lay down their arms. If they were without excuse when *all* were rebels, their crime is neither altered in its nature, nor mitigated in its enormity, by the submission of *some*;—even although that submission has been the effect of distinguishing clemency on the part of their sovereign, extended to such as

* John iii. 19, 20.

† Dissert. on the Influences of the Holy Spirit, by Archibald M'Lean. Works, Vol. II. pp. 110, 111.

had no more title to it than themselves;—that is, to such as had, like them, *no title to it at all.* Where *no claim* exists in any, all may be left to suffer, or all may be included in an act of mercy, or sovereign clemency may freely select its objects. In the last of these cases, the favour that is shown to some is an injury to none. The criminal who deserves to die, deserves not his punishment the less, that another criminal is pardoned. —This is a subject, however, on the full illustration of which it is impossible at present to enter; although I have deemed it necessary thus to state my conviction respecting it; because it is essentially connected with those views which seem to be so clearly taught in the Scriptures, with regard to the sovereignty,—the unshackled and unlimited freedom,—of the grace of God, in the dispensation of those Divine influences, which are indispensable to the salvation of men.

I must conclude this discussion by observing, that the hidden, unseen, mysterious nature of spiritual influence, ought not to be urged as any argument against its reality. On this and some other subjects, we are instructed, simply to infer the operation of the cause from the existence of the effects. *How* these effects are produced,—the particular *manner* of the Holy Spirit's operation, we do not understand; and we are expressly admonished of the vanity of attempting to understand it:—"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth:—so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*—We do not see the wind itself;—but we see and feel its effects. So it is, as to every one that is born of the Spirit. His operation is secret and unperceived. It is sometimes sudden and sometimes gradual. But the reality of his

* John iii. 7, 8.

influence must, in every case, be determined, by its palpable results, in the character of the person who is the professed or apparent subject of it.—The effects of the wind are in proportion to the degree of force with which it blows. "Breathe but an air of heaven," and we perceive its influence, in the stirring of the foliage, and in its grateful and refreshing coolness to our bodily frame. Let the tempest rise:—we hear its dreary howlings, and we witness its mighty power, in frightful desolations, on land and on sea.—But in either case, the agent is invisible. It is only by its effects, that we can discover even the direction in which it moves. "Whence it cometh, and whither it goeth," we cannot tell.—"So is every one that is born of the Spirit."—Let the effects, as they are described in the Scripture, be distinctly manifest:—and from these we may infer the certainty of his previous operation.

Permit me to press, with earnestness, upon your attention, the unspeakable importance of that saving change, of which I have been endeavouring to show that the Holy Spirit is the Author.—Let not the declaration of the Saviour, delivered with so much emphasis, be considered by any of you, merely as an article of your professed creed, but as a matter of fact, infinitely important and interesting to all who hear me,—and no less important and interesting to myself:—"*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"—The question is not, Do you believe the doctrine of the necessity of regeneration?—do you hold it as an article of your speculative creed?—But, have you undergone the change of which the necessity is thus declared? Have *you* been "born again?" Multitudes have *regeneration* in their professed creed, whose hearts are strangers to the change which the word expresses. —I wish to impress you with the *importance* of the question, whether *you* have been the subjects of this change, to prepare

you for the subsequent part of this subject, which will exhibit a more detailed view of its nature; that is, of what is implied in "*having the Spirit of Christ;*" from which the impossibility stated in the text will be manifest, of any man's *being Christ's* who is destitute of this Spirit.

Meantime, one of our chief encouragements, in continuing to proclaim the gospel of salvation, arises from the assurance given us by "the God of all grace" himself, that it shall not prove to *all* who hear it, "the savour of death, unto death." —"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For, as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*

There are certain most benignant and animating declarations, made by the blessed God in his word,—declarations conceived in terms so striking, that, were there no other passages in the Bible in proof of the doctrine of Divine influence in the conversion and sanctification of men, they would, of themselves, be sufficient to determine the point. While I repeat these declarations, as a concluding evidence

* Isaiah lv. 6—11.

of the truth I have been endeavouring to establish—may God, in infinite mercy, by the energy of his Holy Spirit, fulfil them, in the happy experience of all present!—"This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthinesses, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."†

O that the Divine energy of the Spirit of grace may, by the fulfilment of these "exceeding great and precious promises," make it manifest, that "the weapons of our warfare, which are not carnal, are MIGHTY THROUGH GOD to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ!"‡

* Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. † Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

‡ 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

DISCOURSE XII.

ON THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Rom. viii. 9.

"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

I ENDEAVOURED, in last Discourse, to show, that by "*the Spirit of Christ*," in this solemn asseveration of the apostle, we are not to understand his *miraculous communications*;—because this would not only confine the saying to the first age of the church, but, even with regard to it, would render it manifestly untrue:—and, on the other hand, that it could not signify the *mind* or *disposition* of Christ,—those holy tempers of soul which he possessed and exemplified;—because not only were these elsewhere represented as the "fruits of the Spirit," but the language of the context would by no means admit of such an interpretation.

I proposed, therefore, to treat, from this text, of the ordinary gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, as the true and unequivocal evidences of a person's belonging to Christ.

In last Discourse, I confined myself to one point—the necessity of the Spirit's influence to the accomplishment of that saving change, which is represented in Scripture under the striking figures of a new birth, a resurrection from death, a new creation.—I was induced to do so, not merely for the sake of giving compactness and unity to the argument, but by a conviction, that, if this one point were satisfactorily established, little difficulty would remain in admitting his

continued agency, in the subsequent progress of the Divine life in the soul.

I shall not attempt any recapitulation of the train of reasoning then pursued; but shall proceed immediately to the remaining part of my subject.

I must begin, by pressing more particularly on your attention, what was adverted to in the conclusion of the former Discourse,—the unspeakable importance of those inquiries respecting our Christian profession, our present state, and our future prospects, which are instantly and forcibly suggested by the language of the text:—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—"He is *none of his!*" Think what this means. He is not one of those who (to use the apostle's expression in the beginning of the chapter) are "*in Christ Jesus;*" not a genuine friend and follower of the Redeemer; not a subject of his grace, an object of his love, a partaker of his salvation:—but one who wants the characteristic mark of discipleship,—the "seal in his forehead;" and who, instead of being acknowledged, received, and blessed, shall be disowned, and banished, and cursed, at the great day!—To be *his*, on the contrary, we are taught by the context, is to have an interest in his righteousness, and thus to be freed from condemnation:—it is to be spiritually-minded, which even now is life and peace:—it is to have the good hope of a resurrection to life everlasting:—it is to be a child of God, a partaker of his paternal love, and an heir of that glory, with which the heaviest sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared.*—These opposite considerations impart to this subject a degree of importance, such as ought to secure from all the most serious attention, and the deepest concern.

* See verses 1, 6, 11, 11—18.

In exact consistency with the views thus suggested by the immediate context, the Holy Spirit is, in other places, represented as the pledge, or earnest, of "glory, and honour, and immortality." Thus, in a subsequent verse of this very chapter:—"And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the *first-fruits of the Spirit*, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."*—By the "*first-fruits of the Spirit*," are not meant here, I apprehend, the first, or earliest communications of the Spirit; but rather, the Spirit as the first-fruits, or earnest, of what is at the same time specified as the great object of Christian hope and desire—"the adoption,—the redemption of our body."—This is the simplest view of the meaning of the phrase; and it agrees not only with its connexion in the chapter, but with the usual language of the New Testament on the same subject.—A passage precisely parallel occurs, Eph. i. 13, 14.—"In whom also, when ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise; which is *the earnest of our inheritance*, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The "redemption of the purchased possession" is the redemption of the people of God (who are "bought with a price"—the "lot of his inheritance") from the power of the grave; the same event which the passage before us represents as the object of their longing expectation:—and of this event, and the subsequent everlasting possession of the heavenly "inheritance," the Holy Spirit is, in both passages, declared to be the earnest, or the first-fruits.—In like manner, Paul says to the Corinthians: "Now he who stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given *the earnest of the Spirit* in our hearts:"—and again: "Now he

* Verse 23.

that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us *the earnest of the Spirit.*"*

Two inquiries, then, present themselves on this part of the subject:—What is meant by "*having* the Spirit of Christ?"—and, What is the legitimate scriptural evidence of the possession?

In answer to the first of these inquiries, it may be observed, that our "*having* the Spirit of Christ" is obviously, in the apostle's phraseology, of equivalent import, with his "*dwelling in us.*" The simple comparison of the preceding clause of the verse with the latter, which forms our text, is sufficient to show this: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be that the Spirit of God *dwell in you*: now if any man *have not* the Spirit of Christ"—(the same Spirit, observe, called the *Spirit of God* in the one clause, and the *Spirit of Christ* in the other)—"if any man have not the Spirit of Christ," (that is, *dwelling in him*) "he is none of his."—Similar expressions are not uncommon in the New Testament. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God *dwelleth in you*?"† "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, *which is in you*, which ye have of God?"‡—"I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may *abide with you* for ever: even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he *dwelleth with you*, and *shall be in you.*"§

Such expressions (especially those last quoted, from the lips of Jesus himself) serve to throw a clear and simple light on an apostolic phrase, to which I had occasion formerly to advert, in proof of the Divinity and Personality of the

* 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. v. 5. † 1 Cor. iii. 16. ‡ vi. 19. § John xiv. 16, 17.

Spirit—" *the communion of the Holy Ghost.*"*—The idea expressed by the word *communion*,—or *fellowship*—accords precisely with that conveyed by our Saviour's words—" that he may *abide with you*,"—" he *dwelleth with you*,"—" he *shall be in you.*" The apostle wishes, in behalf of the Corinthian believers, the fulfilment of this gracious promise of their Lord. It is the same word that is used,† when Christians are described as having fellowship with the Father, and with the Son: " That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have *fellowship* with us: and truly our *fellowship* is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."‡ And in using this language, John seems evidently to have had in mind the words of his Master, as recorded by himself, in the same Discourse with those formerly quoted in reference to the Holy Spirit, and in immediate connexion with them:— " Jesus answered, and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*"§

If our " having the Spirit of Christ," then, or his " dwelling in us," is the evidence of our being his, and the want of his Spirit, consequently, the evidence of the contrary;—the second question before stated, immediately presses upon our notice: " What is *the evidence of our having this Spirit?*—what are the conclusive indications of his presence?—how are we to know that he dwelleth in us?"

On this part of our inquiry, it may be proper, first of all, to observe, that what our Lord says to Nicodemus, respecting the invisible secrecy of spiritual influence, is just as applicable to the subsequent as to the first operations of the Divine Agent.—The residence of the Holy Spirit in the soul is not to be ascertained by any thing of the nature of direct and

* 2 Cor. xiii. 13. † κοινωνία. ‡ 1 John i. 3. § John xiv. 23.

sensible impulse;—as if his operations were to be felt within, like mechanical impressions. Some notion of this kind, although not, perhaps, distinctly avowed, has often given rise to much enthusiasm. The Spirit is compared to *fire*, on account of the *powerful* and *purifying* nature of that energy which he exerts on the mind and heart. But it would be a false conclusion, to infer from this comparison, that his energy must be sensibly felt, in the same way as the heat of fire is perceived when it affects the body. From the language of some on this particular subject, one would be apt to suspect, if it were not previously known to be otherwise, that they imagine some kind of *materiality*, both in the agent himself, and in the mind that is the subject of his influence.

Neither is the evidence of the *in-dwelling* of the Spirit to be sought for in sudden and violent emotions, the occasional starts, and transient transports of feeling. These are of a nature too unsteady and fluctuating, and, from the influence of constitutional temperament, and various other natural causes, too subject to mistake and delusion, to form a satisfactory proof, in a matter of such unspeakable importance.

To the question, then, What is the proper evidence of any man's "having the Spirit of Christ?" I would answer in general—*The effects produced by his influence on the character of all in whom he dwells.*

Were I to pursue this subject at full length, I should be led to an illustration of all the principles which form the Christian character, in the whole of their extensive and diversified operation;—these, according to the Scriptures, being all the result of Divine influence. The view of the subject to be presented in this Discourse, must, of necessity, be more brief and general.

"When the Comforter is come," said Jesus to his disciples, "whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit

of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *he shall testify of me:*"—"He shall *glorify me;* for he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you."*—The first and great *work* of the Spirit then, is to *testify of Christ;*—to *show the truth concerning him to the mind:*—and the great general *design,* and *tendency,* and *effect,* of all his operations is, to *glorify him.* For, even supposing that the words now quoted had reference to the *inspiration* of his apostles, still it is an obvious conclusion from them, that the same truth which he revealed by inspiration, and attested by his miraculous energy, is the truth, the excellence and glory of which (as we endeavoured to show in last Discourse) he opens the understanding to discern. I wish this leading observation, respecting the nature and principal design of the Spirit's operation, to be kept in mind; because it forms a kind of general principle, throughout the subsequent illustrations.

Since "the vision and the prophecy" were closed, in the isle of Patmos, the Spirit of God has imparted *no new revelations.* The volume of inspiration was then completed; and the heavy displeasure of God denounced against any one who should ever presume either to add to, or to take away from its contents. Every pretension, therefore, to communications from the Spirit, possessing the same authority with the inspired records, is to be treated as either pitiable delusion, or detestable imposture.

It is now the work of this Divine Agent, not to make new discoveries of the mind of God, but to impart spiritual discernment of what is already revealed; particularly concerning the person, character, and work of the Redeemer.—And the very first effect of his illuminating influence, is, to bring the sinner who is the subject of his gracious operation, under

* John xv. 26. xvi. 14.

a deep and abasing sense of his guilt and unworthiness, to humble and simple reliance on free mercy, through the righteousness and atonement of Immanuel. The very first attitude in which such a sinner presents himself to our view, is,—"standing afar off," not presuming "even to lift up his eyes to heaven, but smiting on his breast, and saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Justification by grace, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, I apprehend to be the very first principle of the gospel;—a principle, therefore, respecting which we dare not speak in qualified or undecided terms. And if this be indeed so fundamental a principle, it will necessarily follow, that dependence, for justification, on the grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ, must be one of the first, and most essential features of the Christian character. If the first apparent effect of the Spirit's converting energy is to *bring* the sinner to this dependence; it is also one of the permanent effects of his continued influence, that *the mind is kept in this state;*—kept "looking unto Jesus;" confiding in his atoning sacrifice, as the only ground of acceptance in the sight of God; persisting to renounce,—as forming no part of the meritorious foundation of hope,—all that is felt, or said, or done, *after* conversion; just as, *at* conversion, all was, in this view, renounced, that had been felt, or said, or done, *before* it.

Some of you, possibly, may be disposed to think, that this is an effect, to the production of which Divine influence is not at all necessary. I know none, on the contrary, to which it is more so. In the pride of our fallen nature, there is a violent antipathy against this doctrine of justification by grace; and a powerful and unceasing propensity to the opposite: and the same influence which is necessary to subdue this pride at first, and effectually to bring the mind to

"submit itself unto the righteousness which is of God by faith," continues equally necessary, to maintain the same humble temper of the soul.

We have already seen, that the Spirit of Christ seeks the glory of Christ. But the disposition to confide, either entirely or in part, on any thing else than his obedience and sacrifice;—to ascribe the whole glory of our salvation to ourselves, or to divide it with the Saviour;—is a disposition that robs him, in the mind of the person who cherishes it, of his peculiar honour, and which cannot be the production of that Spirit, of whom Jesus said, "He shall glorify me."—Examine yourselves, then, by *this* test, whether you "have the Spirit of Christ." Has Christ the glory in your hearts, which is his due?—the undivided glory of your salvation?—Is the foundation of your hope what the Spirit has testified concerning Christ in the Scriptures?—Surely you cannot be considered as "having the Spirit of Christ," if you are not joining issue, if I may so express myself, with this Spirit, in *glorifying Christ*;—if you are not resting your hopes on that foundation which the Spirit has revealed, in the "*testimony of Jesus.*"

The Holy Spirit maintains the state of mind of which I have just made mention, *by the law*, and *by the cross.*—Those views which he imparts of the purity, spirituality, extent, and reasonableness, of God's law, produce a deeper and deeper conviction of sin:—while the cross, contemplated with the eye of a spiritually enlightened understanding, at once concurs with the law in impressing on the heart a growing sense of the "exceeding sinfulness" of transgression, and, at the same time, by the amazing grace displayed in the expiation made by the sacrifice of the Son of God, disposes the believer, under the impulse of humble and fervent gratitude, cheerfully to exclude all boasting, and to say with the apostle, "God

forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world!"*

This is the ground-work of all the subsequent operations of the Spirit of Christ. He rears on this foundation the whole superstructure of holiness.

We saw formerly that while, in regeneration, he is the agent, the truth as it is in Jesus is the means by which he effects his gracious purpose. I now add, that the truth is also the means by which he maintains, carries forward, and completes, the good work which he has thus begun.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you," said Jesus to the Jews, "he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life; and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."†—From a state of condemnation to death, he passes into a state of acceptance, pardon, and life:—and at the same time that, by an act of free justification, he thus passes from death unto life in a forensic sense, or in the eye of law; he passes also from a state of spiritual death, of death in trespasses and sins, into a state of new and spiritual life. Then commences his *sanctification*. Those new principles of character are then implanted, which afterwards, with progressive influence, develope themselves, in all the various and excellent fruits of a holy life.

The great distinction between what he now becomes and what he formerly was, does not consist in entire deliverance from the power of sin; but in the opposition, or, as the apostle terms it, the warfare, which now has place in his soul, between the predominant influence of those holy affections and desires which belong to "the new man," and the prin-

* Gal. vi. 14. † John v. 24.

ciples of that corrupt nature,—"the old man,"—of which he continues to partake, and of which he feels and laments the operation: "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."*—This it is, I apprehend, which constitutes the essential difference between the renewed and the unrenewed man. This is the characteristic distinction. For by "the *law of his mind*," of which the apostle speaks, he evidently intends something entirely different from the mere decisions of judgment, or dictates of conscience, against evil, and in favour of good. Natural men,—men who are living "according to the course of this world," and in whom there appear no symptoms indicative of spiritual life,—unless their consciences have become "seared as with a hot iron," know abundantly well what *these* are. They are no strangers in their bosoms. They are their very tormentors. Much secret misery do they occasion to them, and many a desperate struggle. But alas! their struggles are not directed against the sin of which conscience accuses them, but against the admonitions of the inward accuser itself. These they strive, by every means in their power, to suppress, and to silence;—all the inclinations, all the *likings*, of their hearts, still continuing on the side of sin.—There can hardly be conceived two things more essentially distinct, than the constrained approbation of the judgment, and "*delight in the law of God* after the inward man."—This *delight* is seated in the affections of the heart. It implies that the predominant inclination and desire of the renewed soul is to good; while all that is contrary to it is the subject of regret and lamentation, of vigilant

* Rom. vii. 22, 23.

opposition, and of prayer for deliverance:—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

By what influence, I now inquire, is the power and vigour of this "*law of the mind*" maintained, in its contention against sin! The inquiry is answered by Paul, in Gal. v. 17. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary, the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

These words are commonly understood as expressing the same sentiment, which is stated more at large in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans:—*that the desires of the new nature are prevented from being carried into full effect by the remaining corruption of the old.*—This is no doubt a truth;—but I question whether it be the truth which the words were intended to convey. The connexion of this sentiment with the scope of the apostle's reasonings and admonitions is not, by any means, obvious. In the verse immediately preceding, he says: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." To *walk in the Spirit* is to live according to the dictates of the Spirit in the Holy Scriptures;—and to live under the constant and abiding influence of the Spirit, enlightening and purifying, strengthening, directing, and comforting the soul. In proportion as they thus "walked in the Spirit," they would not "fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Then follow the words under consideration;—which may be understood either, in the first place, as *assigning a reason*, why, if they walked in the Spirit, the lust of the flesh would not, of course, be fulfilled:—or, secondly, as *holding out an encouragement* to them, to walk in the Spirit,

* Rom. vii. 24.

as he had just exhorted them, that they might not fulfil the lust of the flesh.—The verse might be literally translated:—"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;—and these are contrary the one to the other;—*that ye may not do those things which ye might desire*,"—that is, which ye might incline to do.—This translation of the latter clause of the verse is, *in the first place*, more close and literal than the other.* *In the second place*, it agrees quite as well with the preceding part of the verse. The ordinary view makes the end of the verse an inference from *the flesh lusting against the Spirit. This* view, on the contrary, makes it expressive of the consequence, or rather the *purpose*, of *the Spirit's lusting against the flesh.* So far, therefore, as respects the connexion with the former part of the verse, the one of these views is as natural and reasonable as the other. *In the third place*, the latter view agrees better than the former with the scope of the context. For any attentive reader may perceive, that by the connective particle "*for*," the apostle intended to introduce, as before noticed, either *a reason* of what he had, in the preceding verse, *affirmed*, or *an encouragement* to what he had there *enjoined*.—The general sentiment expressed, according to this translation, is,—*that it is by the influence of the Holy Spirit, that the desires of the flesh, or of corrupt nature, are kept in restraint, and prevented from being carried into full operation.* His influence is in opposition to corruption. The two are "contrary the one to the other," as sin and holiness, as hell and heaven. It is by the Spirit that the dominion of the old nature is first broken: and it is by the Spirit dwelling in us, that its evil principles are

* The whole verse in the original stands thus:—Η γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος· τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκός· ταῦτα δὲ ἀντίκειται ἀλλήλοις, ἵνα μὴ ἃ ἂν θέλητε, ταῦτα ποιῆτε.

ever after kept under control, and in proper subordination to those higher and better principles, which are the produce of his own operation.

The *continued* influence of the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of believers, is evidently implied in the representations formerly referred to, of his "*abiding with them,*" and "*dwelling in them.*"—Indeed, his abiding energy in their souls, is one of the divine promises in the New Covenant. A "*new heart*" and a "*new Spirit*" are evidently blessings not of transient, but of permanent duration. And in conformity with this, the persons who were to be thus "renewed in the spirit of their mind," were thenceforward to walk in God's statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them," under the power and guidance of that Spirit, which he promises to "put within them."* Their subsequent life of holy obedience was to be supported and regulated by his unceasing influence.—The same thing is also strongly implied in the words of God by Jeremiah: "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."†

I proceed to observe, that in many parts of Scripture *general progress in holiness* is most explicitly ascribed to *Divine influence.*—"Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are *sanctified,* in the name of the Lord Jesus, and *by the Spirit of our God*:"‡—"But we are bound

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. † Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 11. In this verse. "*washing* seems to be used as a general term, inclusive both of *justification*, which is *washing* from the *guilt* of sin, and of *sanctification*, which is washing from its *pollution*. The former is "in the name of the Lord Jesus;" and the latter "by the Spirit of our God."

to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit*, and belief of the truth:"*—"Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you, *will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*"†—"Wherefore, my beloved—work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for *it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.*"‡

Of general holiness, I have formerly had occasion to remark, the two great inward principles are, the *fear* and the *love* of God:—and both these, wherever they exist in the heart, are the product of Divine influence. As to the *fear* of God, this is most explicitly affirmed, in a passage quoted a little ago, where God says, "I will give them one heart, and one way, *that they may fear me* for ever;—*I will put my fear in their hearts*, that they shall not depart from me."§—With regard to the *love* of God, the same thing is declared, with equal precision, in the Divine promise to Israel: "The Lord thy God will *circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*, that thou mayest live."‖ And as this love is the great principle and spring of all obedience to the Divine will, and may, in this respect, be viewed as the "fulfilling of the law;" this "circumcision of the heart" may be considered as equivalent to the promise, "I will write my laws in their inward parts, and put them in their hearts."¶

Another great principle of the new nature,—of the character of the renewed man,—is, *love to the brethren*;—that is, love to them, as the disciples of Christ,—for Christ's sake;—not as *men* merely, but as *good men*;—the "excellent of the earth,"—born again,—children of God,—members of the

* 2 Thess. ii. 13. † Phil. i. 6. ‡ Phil. ii. 12, 13. § Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.
‖ Deut. xxx. 6. ¶ Jer. xxxi. 33.

household of faith. This love Jesus himself specially enjoined, as his new commandment, and as a distinguishing badge, —a characteristic mark, of his genuine disciples:—"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*—This love the apostle Paul includes in his enumeration of the "fruits of the Spirit;"† and to the brethren at Thessalonica he says: "Ye yourselves are *taught of God to love one another.*"‡—That this *teaching* is not mere outward instruction, or information of duty, but implies a Divine influence upon the heart, is evident from the manner in which he elsewhere prays for its increase. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."§—The apostle John, in like manner, pronounces this love to be a principle of the new nature, produced and cherished by the same Divine energy, which effects the regeneration of the sinner: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."‖

This leads me to observe, more generally, that *all* the holy tempers, dispositions, and affections, of the renewed soul, in all their variety, towards God, and towards men, as well as all the personal virtues, when practised from right motives, are represented as the "fruit of the Spirit," or the product of Divine influence:—"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (or fidelity,) meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they

* John xiii. 34, 35. † Gal. v. 22. ‡ 1 Thess. iv. 9. § 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.
‖ 1 John iv. 7.

that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts."*—Every thing, in short, that is different from "the works of the flesh,"—different, that is, from the thoughts and desires, the words and actions of corrupt nature,—we are, in the Scriptures, taught to consider as resulting from the holy agency of the Spirit of God:—so that, wherever we find the prevalent exercise of gracious and heavenly affections, we may at once affirm, that they are neither indigenous, nor self-produced, but implanted by his sacred energy.

I must now further remark, keeping in view the general observation with which I set out,—that all these effects, which constitute, by their combination, the "beauty of holiness," are produced, in their progressive advancement, *by means of the truth*, or *word of God*. "Being born again," says the apostle Peter, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever:"—"He that is born of God," says John, "doth not commit (or practice) sin: for *his seed remaineth in him;* and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."† The *seed*, in both these passages, is the same,—the incorruptible seed of the word of God. And the same word which, according to the one passage, is the means, or principle, of regeneration, continues, according to the other, by its residence in the heart, the great preventive of sin, and the principle of progressive sanctification. The *Gospel*, or "testimony of Jesus," is especially intended;—for "this is the word," adds the apostle Peter, "which by the gospel is preached unto you."—At the same time, the word of God in general, in all its variety and plenitude of instruction, contributes to the same blessed effect. The Scriptures of the Old Testament are denominated by an inspired apostle (and certainly we may extend the appellation

* Gal. v. 22—24. † 1 Pet. i. 23. compared with 1 John iii. 9.

to those of the New)—"*the* HOLY *Scriptures*."* Such they are in their nature. "The words of Jehovah are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."† And the more diligently a Christian studies their contents, under the teaching of the Spirit of truth, the more completely will his soul become *imbued* with the purity which pervades them. Christian holiness has its origin in the spiritual discernment of Divine truth,—the light of moral purity springing from the light of knowledge;—and it is commensurate, in its progress, with the progress of such knowledge. It is, in no instance, an unaccountable effect, which cannot be traced to a cause, or which continues to exist unconnected with the operation of means. It has its foundation, all along, in enlightened principle. "Sanctify them," said Jesus, in his intercessory prayer for his disciples,—"Sanctify them *through thy truth*: thy word is truth."‡—It is the man "whose *delight is in the law of the Lord*, and who *meditates in his law day and night*," that shall be "like the tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth fruit in its season, and whose leaf never fades."§

Besides the word of God, the Spirit operates in promoting holiness, by means of the various ordinances of Christian fellowship; and also, in a special manner, by means of prayer. The former, indeed, might be considered as deriving their efficacy from the word of God;—for they are just various means, appointed by Divine wisdom and goodness, of exhibiting, illustrating, and impressing, the truths and promises of that word. And with regard to the latter, it may be observed, that it is at once the expression of holy affections and desires, and an instituted means, or instrument, of their increase. It brings down from above the necessary supplies of spiritual

* 2 Tim. iii. 15. † Psalm xii. 6. ‡ John xvii. 17. § Psalm i. 2, 3.

influence; and is itself, at the same time, prompted, directed, and animated by the Holy Spirit. He is accordingly denominated, "the Spirit of grace and of supplications:"*—and the apostle Paul says concerning him:—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."†

Another important part of the work of the Spirit consists in *maintaining the inward peace, and comfort, and joy,* of believers in Christ.

THE GOSPEL means, as all of you are aware, *the good tidings.* Now it is of the very nature of good tidings, that, when understood and believed, they inspire the heart with *joy.* —Of "the joy of God's salvation" the Holy Spirit is the original author, by imparting those views of the truth, as a revelation of free mercy to the guilty and the lost, by which it is at first produced in the soul. In the very same way does he continue to maintain it. The same remarks are applicable to this joy, which were made respecting Christian holiness. It is not a mere senseless unaccountable *lightness of heart.* It is not a joy, for which no reasonable cause can be assigned. It is a rational joy;—imparted in a way perfectly consistent with the nature of man as a reasonable being, whose affections are moved and supported by views presented to his mind, such as are fitted to excite and maintain them.

The Holy Spirit is called "*the Comforter:*"—and he fulfils the function which this appellation implies, by "taking of the

* Zech. xii. 10. † Rom. viii. 26, 27.

things of Christ, and *showing them to the mind.*"*—It is by the Spirit that we are enabled to view God as a Father in Christ, and to enjoy the pure and exquisite delight, which the thought of this relation is fitted to inspire:—"Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage, again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father:"†—"Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."‡—It is by the Spirit that a sense of Divine love,—even of the favour of God which is "better than life,"—is produced and maintained in the soul:—"Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."§—The churches are described as "walking *in the comfort of the Holy Ghost:*"‖—The Thessalonians received the gospel, when preached to them by Paul and his fellow-labourers, "with *joy of the Holy Ghost.*"¶ The kingdom of heaven is characterized as "not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and *joy in the Holy Ghost.*"**—Paul prays for the Christians at Rome, that "the God of hope might fill them with all joy and peace *in believing*, that they might abound in hope *through the power of the Holy Ghost.*"†† And for the Ephesians, "that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, might grant unto them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might *by his Spirit*, in the inner man; that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; that, being rooted and grounded in love, they might be able to apprehend, with all saints, what is the depth and height, and breadth and length, and to know the love of

* Compare John xiv. 16. with verse 26. and with xv. 11.

† Rom. viii. 15. ‡ Gal. iv. 6. § Rom. v. 5. ‖ Acts ix. 31. ¶ 1 Thess. i. 6.

** Rom. xiv. 17. †† Rom. xv. 13.

Christ which passeth knowledge; that they might be filled with all the fulness of God."*

This joy *ought to be* permanent.—It is not only described as the believer's *privilege*, but enjoined upon him as his *duty*. Without it, he will give to men a false and discouraging, instead of a just and inviting view, of the nature of the gospel. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord:"—"Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice:"—"Rejoice evermore."†—Nothing is commanded for which there is not assigned a good and sufficient reason. It is impossible for us to rejoice, unless on account of something, brought before our minds, that is fitted to give pleasure. Now, the causes of spiritual joy are always the same: and they are all summed up in the expression, "Rejoice IN THE LORD."—This is a source of joy, always full, and always pure. Unlike the sources of earthly pleasure, which alternately dry up and overflow,—this is a perennial fountain;—"a spring of water,"—of "living water,"—"whose waters fail not."—And while the reasons of joy remain unchanged, being all centred in Him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;"—the *Holy Spirit*, whose influence is necessary to maintain this joy, is freely and faithfully promised "to them that ask him:"—"And I say unto you"—(they are the words of Jesus himself, "the faithful witness")—"I say unto you, Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your

* Eph. iii. 14—19. † Phil. ii. 1, 4, 6. 1 Thess. v. 16.

children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him?"*

Where this joy, then, is absent, or deficient, its deficiency or its absence must arise, I should apprehend, from one or other of three causes.—*In the first place*,—constitutional distemper, in body, or in mind, or, by reciprocal influence, in both:—in which case, the patient stands in need of the counsel and aid of the physician, as much as of the minister of the gospel, and the Christian friend;—and very frequently the exertions of all the three fail of the desired success:—*Secondly*,—erroneous or defective views of Divine truth:—either, for example, a want of sufficiently clear and simple conceptions of the nature of the gospel,—of the unbounded riches, and absolute freedom, of the grace which it reveals, and of the simplicity of that faith by which sinners obtain an interest in its blessings;—or a want of extensive and properly digested knowledge,—confusion of ideas,—contracted, partial, and inconsistent views of the scheme of redemption, and of the general system of revealed doctrine; by which a man is necessarily exposed to be "soon shaken in mind," and consequently to perpetual fluctuation of feeling:—Or, *thirdly*, departure from God, either in open, or in secret sin; backsliding in *life*, or at least in *heart*; for there may be a great deal of the latter, where, in the sight of fellow-creatures, there is very little of the former. The "joy of God's salvation" is a *holy* joy; not to be found in the ways of sin; not to be experienced in "an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God."

If we are destitute of Christian comfort and joy, it is, I think, of essential importance, to have the conviction deeply impressed upon our minds, that *the cause is in ourselves*,—

* Luke xi. 9—13.

entirely in ourselves. It is not God that withdraws from us; but we that withdraw from God. When we *have* withdrawn, indeed, and by our backsliding deprived ourselves of the "joy of the Lord," and of the "light of his countenance," he may make us feel our folly and our sin, by refraining for a time from restoring it. But still, let us remember that the cause is in us;—and that, in every instance in which the effect does not arise from bodily or mental disorder, the cause is, in its nature, criminal. The manner in which some have spoken and written respecting the want of religious comfort, as arising from the *sovereign hiding of God's countenance*, while I am satisfied that it is not, at least in general, their intention, to deny that there is a cause, and that that cause is sin in us, has yet frequently appeared to me too much calculated to produce and to foster an impression of a different kind;—to lead us, when in this situation, or when we see others in it, to look upon ourselves, or on our fellow-professors, rather as *tried* in the course of Divine providence, than as decidedly "*sinning against our own souls*;"—and thus, in either case, to *pity*, rather than to *condemn*. Nay, sometimes (such is the deceitfulness of the human heart), persons get hold of the notion,—which has, perhaps, been suggested to them by the inconsiderate compassion of a well-meaning, but mistaken friend, that their doubts and apprehensions are favourable symptoms of their spiritual state; and under the influence of a lurking, unavowed impression of this nature, they cherish the melancholy, repel the consolations of the gospel, are proof against "the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely;"—and while they exhaust upon themselves the whole vocabulary of reproachful epithets, their very complaints of themselves are dictated by secret self-satisfaction, and are contributing to its increase. In dealing with cases of this description, we ought surely to

be on our guard against any principle, which tends to give ease to the mind in a state of unbelief and departure from God; which identifies dejection and despair with the afflictive visitations of Providence; and which thus enables such persons, with plausible self-deception, to maintain their good opinion of themselves and of their state, by finding the cause of their doubts in the sovereignty of God, rather than in their own sin.

As to men who talk about *religious melancholy*,—a phrase of current use in the gay and thoughtless world,—they "understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." They are naturally fond of the association which the expression implies; because it furnishes a plausible and ready apology for their unaffected horror at whatever wears, in the remotest degree, the aspect of *enthusiasm*,—the term by which they indiscriminately designate all true piety and serious religion. But, in truth, the phrase involves a contradiction. It is like speaking of the darkness of noonday. There is no melancholy in religion;—nor is there any religion in melancholy:—and, where disease is not the cause of dejection, it is, in every instance, not religion, but the want, or the deficiency of religion, to which the evil is justly to be ascribed.

To the whole of this doctrine of Divine influence, it has been objected, that its tendency is, by leading us to depend on supernatural aid, to slacken all exertion of our own powers.

That the doctrine is capable of being so perverted and abused, by ignorance, enthusiasm, or sloth, it is not necessary to deny. But whenever it is rightly understood, not only does the objection vanish, but the very contrary appears to be the truth. It is quite enough, to remind the objector,

that the Spirit of God operates *by means;* and that these means it is *our* duty and our business, sedulously and perseveringly to use. Our dependence on Divine influence does not lessen our dependence on the employment of means: —for, in order to the production of the effect, the means are as essential as the influence. Were we left to our own unassisted efforts, a consciousness of our insufficiency, confirmed by daily experience, might well fill us with despair of success. And such despair tends, more than any thing besides, to paralyze the nerves of active exertion. On the contrary, when we are assured of Divine aid, we feel encouraged to use the appointed means with alacrity and diligence; because we are supported and animated by the promise of present success, and the blessed hope of a happy issue. It is on this principle, accordingly, that the apostle Paul founds his exhortation to spiritual activity:—"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence; work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* This language clearly shows, that in the mind of the apostle the objection had no validity:—for the very consideration which the objector supposes must slacken exertion, he, on the contrary, brings forward as a powerful stimulus to duty.

If it be so, that the operation of the Spirit accompanies, and is proportioned to, our use of the means of spiritual improvement; it must be chiefly, I should think, by the neglect of these means, that we incur the guilt of "*quenching the Spirit:*"†—and more especially when to the neglect of means we add the positive practice of any thing that has an opposite

* Phil. ii. 12, 13. † 1 Thess. v. 19.

tendency.* "*Quench not* the Spirit," may be considered as the counterpart to another exhortation addressed by the same apostle to Timothy, on a similar subject:—"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou *stir up* the gift of God, which is in thee by the laying on of my hands."* In the original language, these words contain an allusion to the stirring up of a fire,† to make it burn with greater brightness and heat; just as in the other exhortation there is an allusion to the extinguishing of a fire,‡ by failing to supply it with fuel,§ or by the application of water, or any other quenching material. Although the latter of these exhortations refers to the miraculous gifts bestowed on the young evangelist by the imposition of the apostle's hands, there appears to be no propriety in limiting to such gifts the application of the former. Instead of "quenching the Spirit," it is our duty, and will prove our highest interest, to cherish all his motions in our souls, and earnestly to seek, that all the various means of spiritual advancement which we use, may be used under the impression of our dependence on his blessing, and may be seconded and rendered effectual by his holy energy.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of purity, and peace, and love. Every thought of the mind, every emotion of the heart, every word, and every action, that is, in any respect contrary to these attributes, is represented as displeasing and grieving to this Divine Agent:—and against all such conduct we are admonished, by considerations of gratitude for the important benefits which we derive from Him;—benefits connected not

* 2 Tim. i. 6. † ἀναζωπυρεῖν. ‡ σβέννυτε.

§ That the word is applicable to this kind of *indirect* quenching,—*suffering to go out*,—one instance may suffice to show. The foolish virgins in the parable say to the wise: "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are *gone out*: ὅτι αἱ λαμπάδες ἡμῶν ΣΒΕΝΝΥΝΤΑΙ: where the meaning is, not that they had actually *quenched* them, or *put them out*, but that they had *allowed them*, through carelessness,—through want of oil and trimming,—*to expire*. Matth. xxv. 8.

only with our present security and happiness, but with our eternal salvation:—"Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."*

Examine, then, by the various tests of his presence and operation, which I have thus, from the Scriptures, endeavoured to lay before you,—whether *you* "have the Spirit of Christ."—Had it not been my object to prove, from the testimony of the word of God, the *reality* of his inward influences, as well as to point out their *nature* and *effects*,—I

* Eph. iv. 20—32. v. 1, 2.

might, perhaps, have led you, for self-examination, to a shorter process. This Holy Spirit is represented, both in the Old and in the New Testament, as poured out, without measure, on "the man Christ Jesus." Now, the influence of this Spirit is the same in *kind*, although not in degree, in his followers as in himself,—in the members, as in the Head. He, therefore, who "has the *Spirit* of Christ" will exhibit conformity to the *character* of Christ.—Is there, then, any resemblance between you and the Saviour? Are you like him, in piety and devotion,—in regard for the authority, and zeal for the glory of God?—Are you like him, in disinterested love and active benevolence to men?—to their bodies,—and still more to their souls?—Are you like him, in purity, sincerity, temperance, patience, self-denial, meekness, and humility?—and in the various other graces and virtues which adorned his perfect character? Do you love to contemplate and study that character, as the pattern which you are desirous to resemble? Is the dissimilitude which you discover upon the comparison, a ground of self-condemnation, and of unfeigned grief? And is it your daily and earnest prayer to God, that by his Spirit he would promote the resemblance, enabling you to "walk even as he walked?" Do you evince the sincerity of this prayer by "striving against sin," sedulously shunning every temptation, "keeping your heart with all diligence," and in the uninterrupted use of the appointed means of spiritual progress, "following holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord?"—These are fruits of the Spirit of Christ; and, in proportion to the degree in which they exist, evidences of your being his. They are evidences of a practical and unequivocal nature. Enthusiasts may pretend to such inward consciousness of the Spirit's operation, as they can distinguish from the ordinary feelings of the mind as certainly as the prophets were assured of their

inspiration. Pretensions of this sort have often brought great discredit on the doctrine we have now been considering. Let *us* rather judge ourselves, as the Scriptures seem to direct us, by those holy effects in the character, which are there described as the result of his enlightening and purifying influence. As the Spirit deals with men agreeably to the principles of their rational nature, it is reasonable to expect, that the *mode* of his inward operation should, in many cases, be hardly distinguishable from the natural progress, and various workings, of the human mind. But mark the *effects*;—opposite as they are to the pride and vanity, the impurity and worldliness, of the human heart, and to all the endless variety of its corruption; —and in these behold the proper and satisfactory indications of his holy agency.

I am much inclined to be of opinion, that one thing which has tended in some degree to darken and perplex the subject of Divine influence, has been, the imputing to the agency of the Spirit certain feelings and states of mind, and certain descriptions of conduct, *in natural men*, for which his agency does not seem necessary to account.—For example:—Is the influence of the Spirit at all necessary, to account for that knowledge of the meaning of the different propositions contained in the gospel testimony, which is possessed by many who have no spiritual understanding of its truth and excellence?—Is such Divine influence necessary, to account for the alarm of conscience which made the Roman Governor tremble before his prisoner, when he "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come?"—or for the pleasure and the partial reformation of Herod, when he listened to the faithful admonitions of the Baptist?—or for the half-persuasion of Agrippa to become a Christian?—I should think it is not. All these, and many similar effects, may, without difficulty, be accounted for, by the operation of principles which are to be

found, in all their force, in our fallen nature. I should be disposed to lay it down as a principle on this subject, that the agency of the Spirit ought not to be introduced in any case, in which the effects produced accord with principles in our unrenewed nature; that is, when they are not inconsistent with that nature, and consequently require nothing beyond that nature satisfactorily to account for them. I may be in a mistake; but I am not at present aware that there are any actions, or states of mind, ascribed in the Scriptures to unrenewed men, for which it is not possible to account on principles merely natural, without supposing the *direct agency* of the Spirit of God on the mind to have had any share in their production.

God says to Noah, with regard to the antediluvian world —"*My Spirit shall not always strive with man.*"*—May not this expression be fairly interpreted as referring, not to any direct internal operation of the Spirit of God, but to his testifying to men their guilt and danger, warning, instructing, and expostulating, by the ministry of Noah, whom Peter designates "*a preacher of righteousness?*"—May not a similar interpretation be given of Stephen's address to the Jewish council: "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, *ye do always resist the Holy Ghost:* as your fathers did, so do ye." It seems evident from what he immediately adds, that their fathers, to whom he compares them, resisted the Holy Ghost *speaking in the prophets:*—"which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them who showed before of the coming of the Just One." Is it not, then, the same conduct of which he accuses the children?—"resisting the Holy Ghost," not in any direct inward operation on their minds—(for it is another and very

* Gen. vi. 3.

different Spirit that "worketh in the children of disobedience")—but in all the convincing evidence arising from his miraculous gifts, and from other sources, that Christ and his apostles spoke under his influence.

With regard to the case of persons who have seemed for a time to "run well,"—who have exhibited much of the external appearance of genuine conversion, but who have afterwards "gone back, and walked no more with Jesus,"—apostatizing from the truth, and from the ways of God;—whatever startling difficulties this case, in some of its more striking varieties, may present to *our* minds, who cannot "search the hearts and try the reins of the children of men,"—it does not appear to me that facts of this description by any means disprove the correctness of the view which I am now giving. They only teach us (and it is a most important lesson) that there may be a very considerable measure of outward appearance, imposing upon men, who can look no further, who have so partial and limited a view of the deceitfulness of the heart, and of the endless multiplicity of its delusive workings;—while there is, after all, a want of the inward reality:—while "the heart is not right with God."—And that we do not, in taking this view of such cases, adopt a hypothesis in order to get rid of a difficulty, appears from the manner in which the apostle John speaks of certain persons who had professed the faith, and afterwards renounced it, and withdrawn from the fellowship of the gospel: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

On this subject, however,—the operation of the Spirit on the minds of the unregenerate, I wish to be understood as speaking with diffidence; as I am aware that many excellent

and judicious men entertain sentiments respecting it different from those which I have now stated.

I cannot take my leave of this subject without again entreating all present seriously to consider the solemn alternative stated in the text. We must "*have the Spirit of Christ,*" else we are "*none of his.*"—I would beseech, with peculiar earnestness, such as deny the existence and influences of the Holy Spirit, to weigh what has been advanced with considerate attention, and humble candour. For, if "the Spirit of Christ" in our text really refers to the influences of that Divine agent, whose Personality and Divinity I formerly endeavoured to establish;—it then becomes a question of no trifling interest, whether it be possible that *they* can "have the Spirit of Christ," who deny entirely the reality and necessity of his operations, and even his very existence; and consequently, *whether they can be truly his.*

I conclude by observing, that those prayers for Divine influences which occur so frequently in the New Testament, are at once a proof of their reality, a testimony to their value, and an example of humble piety which it well becomes us to imitate. Let us, then, appropriate, and make our own, the following supplications; presenting them to God for ourselves and for one another. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,* and what is the exceeding

* ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις—"in the saints."—Various have been the senses affixed to this

greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand:"—"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all, as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints:"—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and (I pray God) your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:"—"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost:"—"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and

phrase.—Whitby says—"i. e. *how great is the inheritance he hath designed for the saints.*" M'Knight not only understands this to be the meaning, but *translates* the phrase, "*for the saints.*"—The Improved Version of the New Testament, "*among the saints.*"—Locke understands it as signifying the glory of the saints in becoming God's people, the lot of his inheritance.—Scott gives this view along with the more ordinary one, connecting them by an *or*, as if undecided which is preferable.—&c. &c.—It has occurred to me, that the phrase might, with sufficient propriety, be rendered, "*in the holy places;*" which at once removes all difficulty and ambiguity.—The phrase ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις occurs three times in this and the following chapter (ch. i. verses 3 and 20, and ch. ii. verse 6.) and is translated—I think correctly even in the first of its occurrences, but certainly in the two latter—"*in the heavenly places.*"—May not the "inheritance *in the holy places*" then, mean the same thing with the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading, *reserved in heaven.*"—See in the Greek, Heb. x. 8, 24, 25. x. 19.

to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask, or think, according to the power that worketh in us; to Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end! Amen."*

* Eph. i. 15—20. 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13. v. 23. Rom. xv. 13. Eph. iii. 14—21.

DISCOURSE XIII.

ON THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Acts xi. 26.

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

It has been a favourite employment amongst speculative grammarians, to trace the changes, produced by the lapse of time, on the signification of words. In not a few instances, these changes are so great, that it is a matter of considerable difficulty to discover the relation between the present and what seems to have been the original import.—That the best way to ascertain the correct meaning and proper use of any term in a language, is to trace it back, if possible, through all its intermediate variations, to its remotest derivation,—is a principle, the justness of which, as one of general application, while by some writers it has been assumed and made the ground of many ingenious philological speculations, has been ably shown by others to be more than questionable.*—But while it does not appear to be generally true, neither is it, by any means, universally false. There are some cases, in which it is a matter of the greatest consequence, to ascertain, either from etymology, or from the existing documents of ancient practice, the precise sense in which a particular term was originally used. This is of especial importance, in cases where that which was originally signified by the term continues in its nature and properties the same, and where, consequently, the

* See the admirable Strictures of Mr. Stewart, in his Philosophical Essays, on the Philological Speculations of Horne Tooke.

deviations from its primary meaning have been productive of deception and mistake:—and, in such cases, the degree of importance is proportionate to the nature of such mistake, and to the magnitude of the consequences which may have resulted from it.

The present application of these remarks, you will all immediately perceive.—There are few words which have, in their ordinary use, deviated more widely from their original application, than the term—CHRISTIAN. In its original use, it was descriptive of a comparatively small number of men, who were distinguished from the rest of the world by a singular and striking peculiarity of sentiments and character. In the use that is generally made of it *now*, it can hardly with truth be said that it is distinctive of principles and character at all;—for it is applied indiscriminately to persons, whose principles and characters are diametrically opposite. Nay, to such a degree has it been generalized in its application, as to have become a term in geography, rather than in religion, marking out—not a distinct and defined variety of individual character,—but *birth*, and *local residence*, and *national boundaries*.—Great Britain is *a Christian country*; and its inhabitants are, of course, Christians, because they are not, by profession, Pagans, or Mahometans.

Whatever advantages may have been considered as arising from civil establishments of Christianity, the serious and pious amongst their advocates have readily and strongly admitted, that *this*, at least, is one of their necessary evils:—I mean, the indiscriminate application to *communities*, of those terms, which properly indicate *personal state and character*; and the incalculable measure of self-deception, of inconsiderate security, and delusive confidence, which has thence, by a fatal necessity, resulted.

It has so happened, that, of a variety of appellations, origi-

nally used to denote the same class of individuals, *Christian* is the one that has been thus sadly perverted from its original and appropriate application. From this circumstance has arisen the curious fact, that the name of *Christian* is taken, and reciprocally given to one another, by multitudes of persons, who never for a moment dream of any of the other terms being at all applicable to them. How many, for example, would be highly provoked, should you refuse them the designation of *Christians*, who, were you to accost them by the appellation of *saints*, would either look at you, in astonishment, for an explanation of your meaning, or, perhaps, fire with the quickness of insulted pride.—Yet the truth is, that *saints* and *Christians* are terms of the same import. No man is a Christian, who is not a saint; and if there be no saints now, at this distance from primitive times, neither are there any Christians.—In confirmation of this remark, let us observe *who they were* who, according to our text, first received, in Antioch, the denomination of *Christians*. They were *the disciples*:—"*the disciples* were called Christians first in Antioch."

Whilst the followers of Jesus, before this time, received from their enemies the contemptuous appellations of *Nazarenes*, and *Galileans*; they were known to one another by the various designations of—*the believers*—*the brethren*—*the saints*—*the faithful*—*the disciples*.—It has been matter of question, *by whom* the appellation of Christians was first conferred. Some, from the particular word used in the original language,* are of opinion that it was given by Divine intimation, through Paul and Barnabas:—while others, I think with more probability, suppose, that, as the Gentiles were accustomed to distinguish philosophical sects by the names of

* χρηματίσαι.

their respective founders, they gave to the followers of Christ the title of *Christians*, in conformity with their usual practice.

It is of much more consequence for us to observe, as I have just hinted, who they were that were so denominated:—"*the disciples.*"—Now, who were these disciples?—The context itself, without going further, will inform us.—They were persons who had been converted by the power of the grace of Christ. Some of the preachers of the word who had come to Antioch, we are informed in the 20th and 21st verses, "spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."—They were persons in whom Barnabas (verse 23) "saw the grace of God," and whom he "exhorted, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." These were, beyond all doubt, persons of the very same description with those addressed by such various appellations in the beginnings of the apostolic epistles.—"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called, saints:"—"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called, saints; with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"—"To the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:"—"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, who are at Colosse."*—These were the persons who were originally denominated Christians; and whom this denomination, therefore, originally distinguished from others:—and if these various appellations and descriptions are inapplicable to us, so also must be the designation in question.

It is of immense importance that we attend to the true and proper meaning of this appellation: that is, to the meaning

* Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 1. Col. i. 2.

of it, as it is used in the Bible. For if our professed Christianity will not abide *this* test, what is it worth? If it will not abide this test, neither will it endure the scrutiny of the great day. According to the Scriptures, Christians are possessed of special privileges and peculiar hopes, to which he who is not a Christian has no legitimate title. These privileges and hopes are of inestimable value; and the value of them gives proportionate importance to the inquiry, whether we be Christians, in the Bible acceptation of the term. To be *called* Christians by fellow-men,—to be addressed indiscriminately as Christians from the pulpit, is nothing:—it will not make you what you are called. The question is not, what you are *called*, but what you *are*:—the touchstone by which this must be determined is the Word of God:—and on the answer to the inquiry depends, as to each of you, the happiness of eternity.

Let me now, therefore, proceed to illustrate, from the Scriptures, a few of the leading and discriminating features of the Christian character.

There are, in Scripture, some general expressions and representations, alluded to in former Discourses, which most strikingly show, that the term *Christian* includes in it a vast deal more than is commonly apprehended, or at all thought of, by the great majority of those among whom it is in current use. A Christian is one who has been "*born again*:" "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*—He is *made alive from a state of death*: "You, being dead in your sins—hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."†—He is a *new creature*, formed anew by the power of God: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away;

* John iii. 3. † Col. ii. 13.

behold all things are become new."*—He is a *child of God*—an *heir of God*, and a *joint heir with Christ*: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."†—Such representations as these are fitted to excite "great searchings of heart" among multitudes who pass under the common national appellation of Christians. They clearly evince, that Christianity is something entirely of a personal nature; and that there must be a very wide difference indeed, between being a Christian, and merely being a member of a particular community, or having been either the subjects, or the observers, of any external rite.

The appellation, according to its obvious etymology, must signify some *relation* or other *to Christ*, sustained by the person who is called by it:—and the simplest and most general idea we can attach to it is, that of a *follower*, or *adherent of Christ*.

But what is implied in being a genuine adherent or follower of Christ?

I answer: It implies being *a disciple of Christ, and a believer of his doctrine:—a lover of Christ:—an obedient subject, and imitator of Christ:*—and *an expectant of Christ*, or *one who looks for his second coming*.

* 2 Cor. v. 17. † Rom. viii. 14—18.

I. Being a Christian means, being A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST, and a BELIEVER OF HIS DOCTRINE:—as an *Aristotelian* meant a disciple of Aristotle, and a *Platonist*, of Plato.

The Christian is one who has learned his religion from Christ, who has embraced the great doctrines of his word, and who continues to sit at his feet, in the posture, and with the dispositions, of an humble disciple.—*Disciples*, and *Believers*, are both of them appellations by which Christians are distinguished in the New Testament Scriptures. Of the former we have an instance in the text itself: "*the disciples* were called Christians first in Antioch." And various other instances of it occur. "Saul breathed out threatenings and slaughter against *the disciples of the Lord*:"—when he was come to Jerusalem after his conversion, "he assayed to join himself *to the disciples*:"—at Troas, on the first day of the week, "*the disciples* came together to break bread."*—Through the preaching and miracles of the apostles, the historian elsewhere says, "*believers* were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women:"—and Paul, in writing to Timothy, exhorts him to be "an example *to the believers*, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.†

In speaking of the Divinity of Christ, in an early Discourse of this series, I had occasion to show the importance of that doctrine, in various respects; amongst the rest, from its intimate relation to other truths. "It is an integral part," I observed, "of a system of truths, which stand or fall "along with it. It is connected, for example, in the "closest manner, with the purpose of Christ's appearance "upon earth, and the great design of his sufferings and "death; that is, with the vitally important doctrine of

* Acts ix. 1, 26. xx. 7. † Acts v. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

"*atonement*:—*this* doctrine, again, is inseparably connected "with the corruption of human nature, and the universal "guilt of mankind; from which it is that the necessity "of such atonement arises:—this, in its turn, essentially "affects the question, respecting the true ground of a "sinner's acceptance with God; the necessity of the "regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit; the principle "and motive of all acceptable obedience; and other points, of "similar consequence.—It is very obvious," I then proceeded to notice, "that two systems, of which the sentiments, on "subjects such as these, are in direct opposition, cannot, with "any propriety, be confounded under one common name. "That both should be Christianity is impossible; else Chris-"tianity is a term which distinguishes nothing. Viewing "the matter abstractly, and without affirming, for the pre-"sent, what is truth and what is error, this, I think, I may "with confidence affirm, that to call schemes so opposite in "all their great leading articles by a common appellation, is "more absurd, than it would be to confound together those "two irreconcilable theories of astronomy, of which the one "places the earth, and the other the sun, in the centre of the "planetary system. They are, in truth, *essentially different* "*religions*. For if opposite views as to the *object of worship*, "the *ground of hope for eternity*, the *rule of faith and duty*, "and the *principles and motives of true obedience*;—if opposite "views as to these do not constitute different religions, we "may, without much difficulty, discover some principle of "union and identity amongst all religions whatever; we may "realize the doctrine of Pope's Universal Prayer; and "extend the right hand of fellowship to the worshippers at "the Mosque, and to the votaries of Brama."*

* Discourse III. pp. 64, 65. Between the delivery of that Discourse, and of the concluding one, there was an interval of nine months.

These sentiments, after mature deliberation, I have seen no reason either to retract or to qualify. Some doctrines there certainly must be that are *essential* to Christianity:—and if those referred to are not such doctrines, I am at a loss to conceive what articles can be considered as entitled to this appellation.

To be a disciple of Christ, and a believer, must surely imply something more precise and definite, than the mere conviction *that the Bible is the word of God.* Even on *this* ground, indeed, some of you may, perhaps, be disposed to think, (remembering the statement formerly given of the vague and qualified, and partial views, respecting the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, held and avowed by those whose sentiments I have been chiefly engaged in controverting)—even on *this* ground, some of you may be inclined to think, there is room for hesitation, whether the appellation of *Christian* properly belongs to them. But, supposing the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures distinctly admitted, still it is not the belief of this that constitutes any one a Christian, —but the belief of *what these Scriptures reveal,* and of those truths in particular which, from their nature, and from the place which they hold in these Scriptures, it was evidently their chief purpose to make known. Let me illustrate this by a parallel instance. Suppose a man were to tell us he was a *follower of Newton,* or (to take a term of the same kind with that in our text) a *Newtonian;*—should we reckon him entitled to this assumed appellation, merely on the ground of his believing the fact, that Sir Isaac was the author of the different works which are ascribed to him; if we discovered, on examination, that he questioned and denied all the leading principles of philosophy, which these works were written to promulgate and to establish? We are at no loss for our reply to this question. And is there, then, let me ask, any

just principle, on which we can, without the very same impropriety and contradiction, denominate that man *a Christian*, who, while he professes to believe the Bible to be the word of God, impugns and reprobates all the most important doctrines which that word contains? For my own part, I can see none.

It is not the belief *that Christianity is a religion from God*, that constitutes a Christian; but the faith of *Christianity itself*. This is a distinction, I conceive, too little attended to. Many a time, after perusing treatises containing evidences of the Divine authority of the Christian religion, has the inquiry forcibly impressed itself on my mind, "Of what advantage is all this to the writer, if, after all, he has left the question *un*answered, or *wrongly* answered—*what the Christian religion is?*"—The outworks of Christianity have been often most ably and successfully defended, while that which all these outworks have been reared by providence to protect, and from the value of which, consequently, they derive their importance, has been either entirely overlooked, or most erroneously exhibited.

I would further, on the same principle, observe, that the faith which constitutes a person a Christian, is more than the simple belief of *the Divine mission of Jesus Christ*;—to which it is exclusively confined by some of our opponents. For what can avail believing that Jesus was a messenger from God, if we deny the great purpose for which he was sent, and the leading doctrines which he was commissioned, himself or by his apostles, to teach to mankind?—The same observation applies to the belief of his being *the Christ*, without Scriptural ideas being attached to the appellation, of his person, and character, and work:*—and also to the belief of

* See Note S.

the facts recorded by the sacred historians, as to his sufferings and death, and resurrection, while the *end* for which he suffered, and died, and rose again, is openly and scornfully disavowed.

The depravity and guilt of mankind;—the Divinity, voluntary substitution, and atonement, of Jesus Christ;—justification by grace, through faith, and not by works of righteousness which we have done;—and the necessity and freeness of the Holy Spirit's influences, for the conversion and final salvation of sinners:—these appear to be doctrines which constitute the very essence of Christianity; and to call by the same appellation doctrines precisely the reverse, is to impose upon ourselves by a mere name;—for our so calling them cannot alter the nature of things, nor in the slightest degree abate the real magnitude of the difference between them.

Men may call these mere matters of opinion; and they may think and speak very lightly of what they are pleased so to denominate. But the Scriptures themselves speak a very different language. If there is one truth within the compass of revelation that is declared with greater frequency, or with greater decidedness, than another, it is the *necessity* of the *belief of the gospel*, in all whom Divine Providence blesses with the hearing of it, in order to the possession of that salvation which it proclaims. This being the plain and unvarying testimony of the Bible, no question can well be conceived of greater consequence, than the question, "*What is the gospel?*" For if the faith of this gospel be essential to *salvation*, it cannot but be essential to a man's *being a Christian.*

So far as I know my own heart, these observations are not dictated, even in the remotest degree, by any feelings of party-spirit. Most gladly and cordially should I embrace as fellow-Christians, all whom the word of God will allow me to consider as bearing that character. But I deem it of the last import-

ance that my hearers should be fully aware of the nature and extent of the difference between us and our opponents. To the common charge of the want of charity, I plead, *Not guilty.* Charity can never preclude the exercise of judgment. *Charity* is the same with *love;* and the judgment of charity is therefore the judgment of love. And surely there is no true love, in allowing others to think that we consider their errors immaterial, and their state secure, when in reality we view these errors as affecting the only foundation of hope for eternity, and the condition of those who hold them as, consequently, full of danger. I know that I shall be pitied for the weakness and enthusiasm of this sentiment: but this shall not lessen my affection for the persons of my opponents, nor abate the earnestness of my desire, that "God may give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth." I do not wish my charity either to keep within, or to go beyond, the charity of the Bible. I would neither, on the one hand, be guilty of disowning any whom Christ has received;—nor would I, on the other, by making less of principles and sentiments than the Bible does, and by confounding things that essentially differ, bring upon myself the woe denounced by the God of truth, against those who "call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness for light, and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."*

I find an inspired apostle treating the doctrine of justification by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, as so decidedly belonging to the essence of the gospel, that he "testifies," in the most solemn and faithful manner, to all who presumed to expect justification by the law,—to all who would have mixed obedience to the law of Moses with the mediation of Christ, as the ground of their acceptance with God,—that

* Isaiah v. 20.

"*Christ was become of no effect to them;*"—that they were "*fallen from grace:*"—and, in the most pointed and emphatical terms, declaring such doctrine "*another gospel*"—(and yet "*not another,*" for it was unworthy of the name)—and pronouncing his deliberate *anathema* against man or angel that should dare to preach it.* Surely, then, we are not left to doubt, whether this apostle would have owned as fellow-Christians those who divest the Redeemer of his Divine dignity, reject and ridicule the very idea of atonement by his death, and, as if in direct defiance of the apostolic testimony, roundly aver that "all hopes founded on any thing else than a good moral life are merely imaginary:—that *other foundation than this can no man lay!*"—borrowing the very words of inspiration to contradict the inspired record.†

When I speak of a Christian as *a believer in Christ*, I mean that he is one who has been deeply convinced of his guilt, as a sinner; of the righteousness of the sentence of condemnation which has been pronounced against him; of the truth of the Scripture testimony concerning Jesus Christ, as a Divine and all-sufficient Saviour, who hath "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and of the entire suitableness of the free salvation revealed through his atonement, to his own state, as a guilty and justly condemned creature;—and who, under an impressive consciousness that he has in himself nothing worthy to form any part of the ground of his acceptance, humbly relies on the mercy of God, through the work and merits of this Saviour alone. I have studied my Bible to no purpose, if this be not the very first principle of the Christian character.

I conclude the illustration of this particular by remarking, that as a disciple of Christ, the Christian *continues* to the end to act the part of an humble learner; sitting at the feet of

* Gal. v. 2—4. i. 6—9.

† See Fuller's Calv. and Soc. Systems compared, 3d edit. p. 168.

Jesus, his Divine teacher; and, sensible of the insufficiency of natural light, receiving his instructions with gratitude and gladness of heart, and with the docile meekness of a little child:—by which means he "grows in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

This advancement in knowledge does not at all imply an incessant variation of sentiment. There are some truths, which he reads in the Scriptures, written as with pencils of light:—and knowing and feeling how opposite these are to certain feelings of pride and corruption in his heart, it is his constant prayer, that he may be established in the faith of them, and his mind preserved from the influence of these blinding and perverting principles of his fallen nature. But, without any change of sentiment with regard to these fundamental truths, it is very evident that he may progressively attain clearer and more comprehensive views of them, in their individual excellence, and in their glorious harmony. The earliest glimmering of the dawn is the same in its nature, with the brightness of the risen sun;—it is LIGHT:—but it is light which increases in splendour, till it reaches its meridian effulgence. The knowledge possessed in heaven, is knowledge without error, and therefore without change:—yet even this, we have reason to believe, is knowledge that shall brighten and expand for ever.

II. The Christian is a LOVER OF CHRIST.

I mention this as a distinct particular, because it is much insisted on in the New Testament, and in such terms as clearly show it to be an essential and distinguishing characteristic.

I have more than once, in former Discourses, adverted to this topic; yet I cannot omit it here, without presenting a very defective portrait indeed, of the character which it is my

object to delineate.—"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity"'—is an expression of apostolical affection for *allChristians;* none being, in Paul's estimation, worthy of the name, who were not animated by sincere and fervent love to the Redeemer. So far from owning as Christians those who were destitute of this sacred principle, and including them in his apostolical benediction, he loads them with a heavy curse,—a curse dictated by the Spirit of God: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha."*—His language on this subject is in full harmony with that of his Divine Master: "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yea, and his own life also,—he cannot be my disciple."† These words, I need hardly remark, were intended to express, not how little we should love our relatives, but how much we should love Christ. So far from implying that our affection to the former ought to be weak, they derive all their spirit and energy from the very assumption that it is, and ought to be, strong and fervent. The lesson which they impress upon our minds is,—that powerful as are these attachments of our nature to kindred, and to life, they must never be allowed to stand in competition with our regard to the Redeemer. The words were originally addressed, with the faithfulness which invariably marked the Saviour's conduct, to "great multitudes, who went after him;" who would no doubt be confounded by the dignity and singularity of the declaration, so completely without a parallel, or even a remote resemblance, in the conduct of the most eminent among the ancient prophets. He addresses the same words, my friends, to you;—to all who, by bearing his name, profess to "go

* Eph. vi. 24. with 1 Cor. xvi. 22. † Luke xiv. 26.

after him."—Mark, then, his words. They are most decisive: —"*he cannot be my disciple!*"—There is no sophistry so subtle as to elude this simple and peremptory assurance. A *Christian*, it surely warrants us to affirm, no one can possibly be, who is not a *lover of Christ.*

Paul prays, in behalf of the Ephesians, "that Christ might *dwell in their hearts* by faith:"—that is, that he might be the object of their fervent and abiding attachment. *Dwelling in the heart* is a phrase elsewhere used by him to express the warmth and constancy of his affection for others. "*I have you in my heart,*" says he to the Christians at Philippi; and to those in Corinth, "I speak not this to condemn you; for I have said before, that *ye are in our hearts*, to die and live with you."*

It is very obvious, that this love to Christ cannot be genuine, unless it regard its object according to scriptural views of his person, character, and work. If it does not, it is not properly love to Christ, but love to a creature of our own fancy: for such is Christ, when we have stript him of what really belongs to him,—of what constitutes the very ground of his claims upon our affection,—and have invested him with qualities to our own mind.—In this view, genuine love to Christ is a necessary effect of faith in him. What the Scriptures testify respecting *what he is*, and *what he hath done*, cannot be understood and believed, without inspiring the heart with this love.

Closely associated with love to the Saviour is the duty of *avowing our attachment*;—of openly declaring our adherence to his cause.

(My remarks here, and in a great part of what follows in this Discourse, are not at all peculiarly directed against those

* Phil. i. 7. 2 Cor. vii. 3.

whose leading errors it has been the principal object of these lectures to expose. It is my desire, that I may be enabled to exhibit a faithful and awakening testimony, to all descriptions of persons who bear the name of Christ.)

On the subject just noticed, we have very decisive language used by our Lord himself:—"Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."*—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in that of his Father, and of the holy angels."† It seems to be in allusion to these pointed declarations of the necessity of an open profession of Christ's name, that the apostle Paul says, when speaking of the gospel testimony:—"The word is very nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."‡—Now, surely we do not affirm too much, when we say, that he cannot be a true Christian, of whom Christ will at last be ashamed.

The appellation of *Christian*, for the reasons formerly assigned, is not *now*, as it was at first, any disparagement.—But are you ashamed, permit me to ask you,—are you ashamed to be known as a believer, and abettor, of the mortifying and obnoxious doctrines of the cross,—those doctrines which the men of this world esteem foolishness? When such a thing is asserted or insinuated, do you feel disposed to blush, and

* Matth. x. 32, 33. † Luke ix. 26. ‡ Rom. x. 8—10.

to hide your head?—I do not mean from timidity and self-diffidence, but from the secret consciousness of shame?—Does this tempt you to shift and prevaricate—to hesitate, and qualify, and varnish, as if you were sensible there was a degree of weakness, and want of spirit, in admitting the charge, and avowing the sentiments imputed to you?—Do you feel ashamed of the world's scorn, and of its various epithets of contemptuous reproach,—a *saint*, an *enthusiast*, a *fanatic*, a *methodist*, a *well-meaning but weak-minded man*?—Or, on the other hand, whilst you do not court and invite reproach, do you count it your honour when it comes upon you?—a participation in the sufferings of a worthy Master, and deriving glory from the excellence of the cause in which it is endured?—Remember what is said of the apostles, when they had been publicly reprimanded, and beaten, and charged to desist from preaching Christ:—"They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name!"* "*Worthy* to suffer *shame!*" That was ardent attachment indeed, that converted shame itself into an honour.—A portion of the same noble spirit is possessed by every one who truly loves the Lord Jesus Christ.

In opposition to the necessity of such open profession to the Christian character, some may possibly be disposed to adduce the case of Joseph of Arimathea, of whom it is recorded that he was "a disciple of Jesus," but "secretly, for fear of the Jews."—It ought, however, to be recollected, that, while we approve of Joseph's discipleship, we are under no obligation to vindicate its secrecy. The question is not, What was his conduct, but whether this conduct was right. I apprehend that, for the time it lasted, the concealment of

* Acts v. 41.

his convictions was the effect of temptation, and was Joseph's sin. But he afterwards redeemed his character from the charge of timid and temporizing policy, by coming forward, and avowing himself, at a time when the motive of avowal could not possibly be mistaken or suspected;—even at that critical and trying season, when those who before had been his open friends had forsaken him, and fled. He who had been a disciple "*secretly*, from *fear*," went in *boldly* unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus;" and, in company with Nicodemus (a character of a somewhat similar description) paid the last funeral honours to him who was "despised and rejected of men."—Peculiar circumstances of temptation, it is admitted, may sometimes seduce a genuine disciple to unworthy concealment. But this will never be the *character*, —never the constant practice, of any man who deserves to bear the name of the Redeemer. The language of Jesus himself, formerly quoted,—"Whoso shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels,"—is strong and decisive;—and not less so are those terms in which the apostle connects *confession* with final *salvation*, as necessarily as *faith* with *righteousness*, or justification:—"With the heart man believeth *unto righteousness*, and with the mouth confession is made *unto salvation*."—I fear to qualify such explicit declarations, lest I should deceive myself, or deceive others. To such as act the dastardly part of denying or being ashamed of Christ, he might well say, with all the emphasis of indignant expostulation, "Is this thy kindness to thy friend?"—Of one thing at least I am confident, that he who is disposed to make it a matter of inquiry with himself—"With *how much secrecy*, with *how little distinction from the world*, may I be a follower of Christ?"—has strong reason to suspect the sincerity of his

attachment. You would care very little, I presume, for that man's friendship, who should make to yourselves in private the warmest protestations of regard, while he made it his anxious study to shun you in public, and to conceal from the world the existence of any intimate connexion.

Connected with this readiness to "confess Christ,"—to say before men, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus," is the disposition to give to him, and to his truth and cause, the decided preference above every thing else in the world.—Observe the language of the Lord himself:—"So also, whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple:"*—and consider, that you may examine yourselves by the comparison, how this temper of mind was exemplified by the apostle of the Gentiles:—"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."†—Have *you*, my hearers, drunk into this Spirit? Are your sentiments and feelings in unison with these? Whether has Christ or the world the chief place in the affections and desires of your hearts? What sacrifices have *you* made for the Redeemer? Have you ever made any? Are you willing to make any? Have you ever denied yourselves any earthly

* Luke xiv. 33. † Phil. iii. 7—11.

gratification, any enjoyment which the world is accustomed to pursue, from regard to his authority, from attachment to his cause, to maintain the consistency of your profession of his name, or to give you the means of diffusing his truth and advancing his glory?—Jesus says, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, cannot be my disciple." Do you know at all by experience, what is meant by "bearing the cross?"—or what Paul intends by "the *offence* of the cross?"—Or, have you rather met the world half-way?—and by timid compromise, and temporizing conformity, succeeded to your wish, in retaining an interest in its good graces; and in making your religion, with self-applauded prudence, admirably to comport with the approving smiles of fashion, of infidelity, and of wealth, and with the security and advancement of your worldly interests?—Examine your hearts on this point, as in the sight of God. Have you ever seriously thought, or thought at all, of what Jesus means, when he affirms the necessity of a man's "*forsaking all that he hath*," in order to his being a true disciple of his? Is your attachment to the Saviour really such, that there is nothing in this world which you would not part with,—nay, that you would willingly sacrifice all that pertains to this world together,—rather than renounce his name, and forfeit an interest in his love and in his blessing?—Were Christ to put to each of you the searching question addressed by him to Simon Peter,—"LOVEST THOU ME?"—could you, without your heart giving the lie to your lips,—without the blush of conscious falsehood suffusing your cheek, reply, as he did, "Lord, thou knowest all things;—thou knowest that I love thee?"

III. The true Christian is a SUBJECT and IMITATOR OF CHRIST.

I class these two together, because they are, in the nature

of the thing, inseparable. The precepts of Christ were so embodied in his example, that he who obeys imitates, and he who imitates obeys. Conformity to his *example* is conformity to his *will.*

"Ye call me Master and Lord," said Jesus to his disciples, "and ye say well; for so I am." In this character, he claims obedience. The relation implies authority on his part, and subjection on ours.—"Why call ye me Lord, Lord," said he at another time, "and do not the things which I say?" Such conduct is inconsistent, ungrateful, perfidious; most dishonouring to the Redeemer, and ruinous, in the end, to the traitor who is guilty of it:—"Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man who built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that, without a foundation, built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."*

We may be confidently assured, that no man has any interest in Christ as a Saviour, who is not subject to him as a Lord;—who does not practically evince his desire to yield unreserved and impartial obedience to his precepts; "esteeming all his commandments concerning all things to be right, and hating every false way." The very first question of the renewed mind, alive to the claims of gratitude for redeeming and quickening grace, is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—Of this willing obedience, the *love* illustrated under last particular, is the inward principle, and impelling spring.

* Luke vi. 47—49.

"The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died; and that he died for all, that we who live should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again."*—This language of an inspired apostle, accords with that of the Lord himself: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:—If a man love me, he will keep my words:—He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings."†—Let a man's professed creed, then, be ever so pure,—if he does not add to the profession of faith the fruits of practical godliness, he is not *a Christian;*—for, in truth, he is not a believer of what he professes.

Some men are, by profession, staunch and thorough Calvinists;—rigid sticklers for every iota of the system;—and can "reason high" on the most abstruse and difficult articles of doctrinal theology:—yet, if you look to their characters, you can discover nothing like the genuine influence of Divine truth. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation," and of which they say so many fine things, has not taught them to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."‡—Their whole deportment, on the contrary, shows them to be "men of the world," unrenewed in the spirit of their minds. These are mere theological speculators, who have paid some attention to divinity, as a kind of abstract science, or, in consequence of early education, have grown up in some acquaintance with the doctrines of a system;—but who know nothing whatever of the heart-searching and heart-changing power of the word of God:—talking believers, but practical infidels. Let it

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. † John xiv. 15, 21—24. ‡ Titus ii. 11—13.

not, for a moment, be imagined, that our attachment to doctrine is of such a nature, as to induce us to acknowledge as Christians persons of this description, merely because they profess a creed, of which we reckon the leading articles to be scriptural. God forbid that we should thus contribute to aid their self-deception! Such men, let them say what they will, are "without God, without Christ, and without hope." They are "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity." Their pretended faith is without works, and is "dead, being alone." They "have a form of godliness, but are destitute of its power." "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him." They betray the Son of Man with a kiss; and he will say to them at last, "Depart from me; I know you not, all ye workers of iniquity."—These, indeed, are the very worst of characters;—false friends;—traitors in the camp;—whose profession of attachment is inconceivably more dishonouring to the Saviour, and more deeply injurious to his cause, than avowed and virulent infidelity.—"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*"*

I have, on former occasions, endeavoured to show, that it was not the main design of Christ's coming into the world, to set before us, by his conduct in it, a perfect example. It is, however, an important truth, that in connexion with the fulfilment of that great work of propitiation which, as Mediator between God and men, he came to execute, he *did* "leave us an example, that we should follow his steps." And "he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked."†

I touched on this subject in last Discourse, when, in illus-

* 2 Tim. ii. 19.

† 1 John ii. 6.

trating the import of the expression "*having the Spirit of Christ,*" I showed that the possession of the same Spirit will be manifested by similarity of character. If we are *Christians indeed,* we must *resemble Christ.*—We must resemble him, first of all, in piety towards God. This will display its sacred influence, in the choice of God himself as the portion of our inheritance, and of our cup—"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee: my flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever:"—in desire after communion with him, in the closet, in the family, and in the sanctuary:—in supreme regard to his authority, as the rule of all our conduct, in opposition to the "will of the flesh," and to the "doctrines and commandments of men:"—in keeping our eye simply and uniformly directed to his glory, as the great end at which all his creatures ought habitually to aim:—in practical zeal for his cause and honour in the world:—and in humble and cheerful submission to his will, under all the trying appointments of his providence.—We must resemble him also in personal sobriety and purity, in all the various departments of these virtues; and in spirituality of mind, and holy superiority to the vanities of time.—We must be like him, too, in the practice of all the social virtues,—justice and integrity, sincerity and truth, humility, meekness, long-suffering, and forgiveness,—the various affections and corresponding duties arising from the different relations of life,—and universal benevolence to mankind, evinced in beneficent, disinterested, and self-denying exertions to promote their welfare;—their welfare both in body and in soul;—their temporal, spiritual, and eternal interests.

There is one feature of character, which, on this part of the subject, claims to be particularly specified,—I mean *love to the brethren,*—love to the disciples of Christ, *as such:* not on

account of any relation of consanguinity which individuals amongst them may bear to ourselves, nor on account of any thing which is common to them with other men, but "*because they belong to Christ.*"—In the language of prophecy, the Messiah is represented as saying: "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints which are upon the earth, and to the excellent, *in whom is all my delight.*"*—We must, in this, be of one heart with him; having *our* delight in those who are, in his estimation, the excellent of the earth.—This peculiar love to the members of the household of faith, is ever represented in the New Testament, as one grand criterion of a genuine profession of Christianity:—"A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love (of Christ) because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."†—Is this, then, the state of your affections? Are "the saints that are on the earth" your chief friends? And do you love them, and delight in doing them good, for the sake of their blessed

* Psalm xvi. 2, 3. † John xiii. 34, 35. 1 John iii. 14—19.

Master?—even of Him who will say, at last, respecting all the labours of love, performed for his sake to those whom, with affectionate condescension, he honours with the name of *brethren*, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*

Examine your profession of Christianity by this, and by the other practical tests that have been laid before you.—There may be, and very often is, a great deal of external virtue, where there is no genuine inward principle;—the shadow, without the substance;—the inanimate body, without the breath, and the living soul. But, on the other hand, where there *is not* the outward practice of virtue, and (to use a term less familiar in the world, but which means virtue sanctified by piety,—without which, indeed, virtue is a mere name)—where there is not the external performance of the duties of *holiness;* all profession is worse than vain:—it is a provoking insult, and an impious mockery, of that Divine Master whose name is so falsely or so thoughtlessly assumed.

It is true, that the Christian is deeply conscious to himself of much failure, and of universal deficiency. Yet the grand features of resemblance are marked and visible:—he is sincerely and earnestly desirous of increasing conformity:—he studies the perfect example with growing delight:—and "beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, he is changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."†

IV. The Christian is an EXPECTANT OF CHRIST; ONE WHO LOOKS FOR HIS SECOND APPEARANCE.—He is distinguished by his *hopes*, as well as by his principles, and by his character.

* Matth. xxv. 40. † 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The hope of the Christian divides itself into three parts:—his hope *during life*,—his hope *at death*,—and his hope *at the second coming of Christ*. To this last period Christian hope is most frequently represented as looking forward,—because the expectation of that event is naturally considered as including all that shall intervene before it.—The saints of God, under the ancient dispensation, were distinguished by their hope of the coming of the promised Messiah in the fulness of time. And as the hope of his *first* coming characterized his people *then*, so does the hope of his *second* coming characterize them *now*.

That he *will come*, to raise the dead, and to judge the world, to bless his faithful people with complete salvation, and to execute on his enemies the vengeance due to their impenitent rebellion,—the Scriptures do most plainly and abundantly testify. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also:"—"And when he had spoken these things, as they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them, in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven:" —"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall first rise;—then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them

in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." *

And while the certainty of the event is thus clearly affirmed, it is no less evident, that the hope of the event, and the influence of that hope, are distinctive marks of a *Christian;* —of one who is such, not in name only, but in heart. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many; and *to them that look for him* shall he appear the second time, without a sin-offering, unto salvation:"—"Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and *to wait for his Son from heaven,* whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come:"—"*Looking for* that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ:"—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that *love his appearing.*"†

The temper of mind which these various expressions describe is exemplified in a very impressive and edifying manner, in the conclusion of the Bible:—"He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. *Even so come, Lord Jesus!*"‡—The spirit breathed in this holy aspiration, is to be found, although in very unequal degrees, in every faithful follower of the Redeemer.—There is included in it,

* John xiv. 1—3. Acts i. 9—11. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.
† Heb. ix. 27, 28. 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. Titus ii. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.
‡ Rev. xxii. 20.

in the first place, a firm belief that he *will* come:—that, as certainly as the word of God was verified by his coming the first time, it shall also be verified by his second appearance. And this confidence, resting on the faithful declaration of the God of truth, and maintained by all the accumulated evidence which proves the Bible to be his word,—stands unshaken by the profane taunts of the ungodly scoffer, who says still, as he said in the days of old, "Where is the promise of his coming?"*—*Secondly*, Glad anticipation of the event:—because it shall be a time of unprecedented honour to their Lord and Redeemer; who shall then be "glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;" and, instead of hanging on the cross, in ignominy and pain, "despised and rejected of men," shall occupy, amidst surrounding millions, the throne of universal judgment:—and because it shall be the time of complete salvation and triumph to his redeemed people; of the personal glory and blessedness of each, and of the social happiness of all.—*Thirdly*, Habitual preparation for its approach. "None of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."†—The Christian lives with an eye to his final account. He tries his conduct, not by the standard of present interest or advantage, of any kind, but by the light in which it shall appear when he shall stand at the tribunal of Christ. He endeavours habitually to act according to the spirit of the apostolic exhortations—"Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought

* 2 Peter iii. 1—10. † Rom. xiv. 7—9.

unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ:"—"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."*—*Fourthly*, Patient expectation of it.—The Christian is subject to many and various distresses, some of them "common to men," and others peculiar to the children of God. He is "in heaviness through manifold trials." But, in the hope of the glory that shall be revealed, he "possesses his soul in patience." As "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain," so waits the believer for the salvation of God; "stablishing his heart, because the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."† He "rejoices in hope," and is therefore "patient in tribulation:"‡ —not murmuring, and fretting, and weary of the world, on account of its trials, but "resting in the Lord, and waiting patiently for him;" happily assured that his light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."§

This hope, from its very nature, possesses a sanctifying influence:—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And *every man that hath this hope in him* (that is *in Christ*‖) *purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*"¶ —It cannot fail to be so, from the nature of the thing. That

* 1 Peter i. 13. 2 Peter iii. 14.

† James v. 7, 8. ‡ Rom. xii. 12. § 2 Cor iv. 16—18.

‖ "*In him.*"—The expression is commonly interpreted as if it referred to the believer's having this hope *in himself*, that is residing in his mind and heart. The phrase in the original, however, is ἐπ' αὐτῷ, which expresses not the exercise of hope in the heart of him who possesses it, but the ground on which his hope rests.

¶ 1 John iii. 2, 3.

which we *hope for* we *desire;*—and that which we *desire*, we *pursue.* Likeness to Christ, and the felicity thence resulting, cannot be the object of hope, without being the object of desire; nor can it be the object of desire, without being the object of present pursuit. So that every one who really has *this* hope in Christ,—that is, whose hope has not only Christ for its foundation, but complete conformity to Christ in the perfection of holiness for its object,—will infallibly "purify himself even as he is pure."—To the man who does not thus purify himself, holy conformity to Christ cannot be the object of hope; for if it were, he would *like it*, as no man can be said to *hope* for what he does not *like:*—and if he liked it, he would show this by now seeking after its attainment. The object of such a man's hope, if he has formed in his mind any definite notion of it at all, must be something essentially different.

The *ground* of this hope, which has just been alluded to, is no less distinctive of the Christian than the hope itself.—In looking forward to the *second* coming of his Lord, his hope of acceptance and of eternal life, rests on that work which he finished at his *first* coming;—on the atonement made by the blood of his cross.—Convinced that there is only one spot on the face of this earth, from which a guilty creature, whose mind is properly impressed with the holiness of God and the evil of sin, can view the solemnities of an approaching judgment without dismay; the Christian transports himself in faith to the heights of Calvary;—takes his station there at the foot of the cross;—and, clinging to the sacred tree on which his Divine Redeemer finished the expiation for sin, surveys, with steady eye, the overwhelming scene.——The heavens open,—not in tranquil serenity, as when, on the banks of the Jordan, the Spirit of peace alighted on the Son of God, to consecrate him to his office,

—but rending and rolling away, with a mighty noise: he beholds the descending Judge, revealed in effulgent glory, and "all his holy angels with him," "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands:"—he hears "the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God," "louder than a thousand thunders:"—he sees the great white throne erected;—the millions of the dead starting to life, and gathering before the dread tribunal,—while "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne the heavens and the earth flee away, and no place is found for them;"—"the judgment set, and the books opened;"—the whole race of mankind assembled, on the right hand, and on the left,—all waiting their respective dooms, with joyful hope, and trembling apprehension!—With the eye of prophetic faith, he beholds all this,—and with deep solemnity of spirit he anticipates his own appearance at the bar of judgment. Conscious of unworthiness and guilt, and impressed with holy awe in contemplating the purity and the majesty of the Judge, and the inconceivable magnitude of the results of that "great and dreadful day of the Lord,"—he breathes with humble fervour the prayer—"God be merciful to me a sinner!"—"If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, who, O Lord, should stand?"—"Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight no flesh living can be justified."—But his supplications are not the language of despair. He has hope,—"good hope through grace." Did he look only to the throne, indeed,—only to the judgment-seat, with all its attendant solemnities,—his heart would fail him;—but, looking alternately to the Throne and to the Cross, the view of the one takes away the terrors of the other. He who occupies the throne of judgment, is the same who "bore the sins of his people in his own body on the tree." The SAVIOUR is the JUDGE. The remembrance of this re-assures his spirit, and animates him

with the confidence of hope:—"There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared:"—"Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, who retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy:"—"Lo this is my God; I have waited for him, and he will save me: this is the Lord; I have waited for him, I will be glad and rejoice in his salvation:"

"Not in mine innocence I trust,
"I bow before thee in the dust,
"And through my Saviour's blood alone,
"I look for mercy at thy throne."

I have thus endeavoured, by the light of the Divine word, to present a sketch of the principal features in the character of a CHRISTIAN. It has been my aim, to fix the standard, neither too high, nor too low:—not too high, lest I should dishearten the timid;—not too low, lest I should encourage the presumptuous. Some may, perhaps, be disposed to "bless themselves in their hearts," and to thank God that it does not belong to *me* to fix the standard, or to draw the lines of distinction. To such I have only to say, as I have said on former occasions, "To the Law, and to the Testimony: if I speak not according to this word, there is no light in me."

Even amongst those who bear, in a satisfactory measure, the character which has been described, there are still, notwithstanding this happy resemblance to one another, various party distinctions. Alas! that there should be so many!—O that it were the desire and the study of all, to attain, by the grace of God, to higher and higher degrees of that knowledge, and of those holy virtues, which all possess in common, and by which all are distinguished from the world; and,

instead of glorying in the name of their respective parties, rather to glory in the common, but infinitely more excellent and honourable appellation of CHRISTIAN!—that, instead of saying "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," all would fervently unite in saying, "I AM OF CHRIST."—An increased manifestation of the lovely excellencies of the Christian character will promote Christian love—a virtue, of which the strength must necessarily be proportioned to the number and degree of the amiable qualities discernible in its object:—mutual love will inspire mutual candour:—and mutual candour will diminish differences, and facilitate union. —But even amidst remaining diversities of sentiment among those who hold the great essential articles of the Christian faith, let there be—(why should there not?)—UNION OF HEART. It is by this kind of union chiefly, rather than by unity of sentiment, that the spirit and influence of the gospel are most strikingly exhibited, and that the Saviour's intercessory prayer is fulfilled, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all them also who shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."* Indeed, as the force of any moving power is best ascertained, and most strikingly displayed, by the resistance which it overcomes, so is the uniting energy of the great truths of the gospel the more conspicuously and impressively seen, when it conquers those obstacles to unity of affection which arise from the separating influence of points of inferior magnitude. So that if Christians, "holding the Head," although conscientiously differing on such points, were, in their intercourse with one another, to show that the power of the momentous

* John xvii. 20, 21.

truths in the faith of which they are agreed, is decidedly predominant, that they feel themselves one in Christ Jesus, and that, although they find it expedient and more conducive to edification to be separate in church communion, they, nevertheless, "love as brethren,"—the effect would be even more powerful on the minds of the world, than if there existed a perfect unity of sentiment. The world would say, as of old, "Behold how these Christians love one another!—and, "taking knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus," would behold, in its effects, the Divine authority of his doctrine, "and believe that the Father had sent him."

What a happy world would this be, were Christians what they ought to be, and all men Christians!—And let us rejoice:—the period is approaching,—by the signs of the times, rapidly approaching,—when the prevalence of true Christianity shall be as extensive as the world; when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea!" We seem already to hear "voices in heaven," —voices of triumphant gladness, "saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."*—"The New Jerusalem is descending from God out of heaven," in all its loveliness and glory. Soon shall

> "One song employ all nations, and all cry
> "Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!
> "The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
> "Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
> "From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
> "Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
> "Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

Every one who deserves the name of Christian is "feelingly alive" to whatever concerns the glory of God his Saviour, and

* Rev. xi. 15.

the salvation of his fellow-men, by which that glory is principally advanced:—and to all who partake this holy sensibility, there cannot be a prospect more full of animating delight than this. He who can witness, without lively emotion, the diffusion of God's "saving health," and the conversion to Christ of sinners of every kindred, and tribe, and tongue, and nation, has good cause to doubt whether he possesses a spark of that sacred fire which glowed in the bosoms of the early Christians. He wants the characteristic affections of a child of God. He wants the spirit of heaven,—is not of one mind with its blessed inhabitants;—for "there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

This additional mark of a genuine Christian is one which merited more than the incidental notice which I have just taken of it. I know few things, indeed, which afford a more correct standard, by which to estimate the state of religion in the heart of any one of its professors, than the degree of interest which he feels and manifests, about the spread of the gospel, and the success attending it in its progress. Can *he*, think you, have felt the misery of his own guilty and lost condition, who feels little or no concern about the spiritual degradation and wretchedness of his fellow-sinners?—Can he have felt the incalculable preciousness of his own soul, who is indifferent and uninterested about the salvation of the souls of others?—Can he have felt his infinite obligations to "the Lord that bought him," whose heart is a stranger to any concern about the Redeemer's glory,—a stranger to the desire that he may "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied," and to that kindred joy which springs up in the renewed mind, when this desire is gratified?

In this world, Christians are mingled, in human society, with hypocrites, unbelievers, and wicked men. The tares and the wheat grow together until the harvest. But the

time is coming, my friends, when there shall be a universal development of character, and a complete and eternal separation of the precious and the vile. The "multitude which no one can number, collected out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, singing with a loud voice, Salvation to our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb!"—In that vast assembly, there shall be no mixture of character,—no discordance of sentiment or of feeling. The Divine Redeemer, having "gathered out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them who do iniquity," shall "receive his people to himself, that where he is there they may be also:"—and all shall be sincerity —all love, and peace, and purity, and joy!—"Who are these who are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?—These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water:—and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

I have thus finished my intended series of Discourses. My sole object has been, to vindicate and establish important Scriptural truth. I have not amused you with idle and unprofitable speculations;—but have endeavoured to set

* Rev. vii. 13—17.

before you, in their true light, doctrines most intimately connected with the glory of God, and the eternal interests of men.—If it shall be found that these objects, in their nature inseparable, have been, in the smallest degree, promoted:—that the faith of God's people has been strengthened,—or the minds of the wavering settled; that, in any one instance, the gainsayer has been convinced, or the careless sinner awakened, and "turned from the error of his way;"—I shall consider my reward as obtained, and my labour as infinitely more than compensated.

"Now, unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy,—to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever! Amen!"*

* Jude, verses 24, 25.

CONCLUDING GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

THERE are a few reflections of a general nature arising from the whole of this controversy, which it will be more suitable to introduce in this place, than in the form of a Note.

And first of all, I am myself more and more deeply impressed, and would wish to convey the same impression to the mind of every reader, with the vast and essential importance of the points of difference between the two systems, whose respective claims to scriptural authority form the subject of the controversy. As I have more than once adverted to this topic in the discourses, some may conceive that in recurring to it again I expose myself to the charge of needless reiteration. I plead in my defence the excessive tendency there is, on all subjects connected with religion, to a generalizing of terms, and to a latitudinarian charity that would groupe together, under common designations, things the most dissimilar and opposite. The attempt to reduce the magnitude, or to lighten the weight, of the differences at present in question is as vain a one as could well be made. They respect all that is fundamental in Christianity. With as much wisdom might you try to unite the poles, or to bring east and west together. It is not at all a case, in which, by mutually explaining, and softening down, the sentiments of the contending parties may be made to meet, or even to approximate. It is mere childish affectation of liberality, to talk as if they could. The two systems, which of them soever be the right or the wrong, stand as antipodes to each other, with the whole world between them. If it be Christianity, that the Son and the Holy Spirit are

God, equal with the Father, and entitled to supreme adoration and homage;—that man is a fallen, guilty, and depraved creature, and, as such, utterly incapable of obtaining acceptance with God, on the ground of his own obedience, or righteousness;—that the great design of Christ's coming into the world was, to atone for human guilt by the sacrifice of himself; and that his sufferings and death were thus vicarious and expiatory, and his resurrection from the dead the evidence of their efficacy, as well as the pledge of life to all who trust in his finished work;—that the influence of the Divine Spirit is necessary for the illumination of the understanding in the things of God, and for the renovation and progressive sanctification of the soul;—that the present life is the only period during which sinners of the human race can be brought to "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus "Christ," and to consequent salvation;—that the good works of believers form no part of the ground of their justification before God, and their enjoyment of eternal life, but, they themselves being previously "accepted in the Beloved," their works also, springing from a heart renewed by grace, are accepted and approved, as fruits and evidences of that "faith which worketh by love:"—if these, and other kindred doctrines, be Christianity, how, in the name of common sense, is it possible, that their opposites should be Christianity too? Is it not infantile weakness, for the abettors of either of these opposite systems to be angry with the supporters of the other, because they decline giving them the appellation of *Christians*? Why are we to convert this sacred name into a mere epithet of unmeaning compliment? The inconsistency is equal on both sides. It is just as absurd for them to bestow it on us, as it would be for us to bestow it on them. If our opponents be Christians, we are deluded idolaters, miserably deceived in the object of our worship, and the foundation of our hope!

Why should we disguise this matter, and delude ourselves and one another, by taking a name in common, when we have hardly a principle in common? I am quite prepared for the ordinary charge of illiberality and narrow-mindedness. But the charge, in such a case, has no foundation in Scripture, or in common sense; and I therefore disregard it, and cheerfully yield the world's plaudits to those who, so unphilosophically, as well as so unscripturally, confound under one common term, things so essentially different.

Let me rather warn my fellow-Christians, to beware of every attempt, however imposing and plausible, to seduce their minds into a light estimate of essential truths.—Deeply impressed with the holiness and justice of God; the purity and righteousness of his law, in its requirements and in its sanction; the unutterable malignity and demerit of sin; and the guilt and helplessness of your state as sinners;—you have felt your need of such a salvation as the gospel makes known; a salvation, wrought by a Divine Saviour, suited, in its *freedom*, to your state as unworthy sinners, and adequate, in its *greatness*, to the full extent of your guilt; a salvation, in perfect harmony with the demands of the Divine law, "magnifying and making it honourable;" a salvation, in full accordance with all the attributes of the Divine character, "glorifying to God in the highest."—Let me beseech you, then, "that with purpose of heart ye cleave unto the Lord." "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in "him; rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the "faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with "thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through "philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, "after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

"And ye are complete in Him."*—While men continue so insensible to the corruption of their nature, and to the extent of their sinfulness and guilt, as to fancy that their *good life* is to be the ground of their acceptance with God and their final salvation, it is not to be wondered at, that they should feel no need for an atonement, for the grace of a Divine Saviour, and the enlightening and renewing influences of a Divine Spirit. Let a Unitarian once be brought to see *himself* aright, in the glass of the Divine word, and he will, at the same moment, feel the inadequacy of his system to the awful exigencies of his situation, and will "flee for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before him" in the gospel. Here, in my apprehension, lies one of the primary errors of the system, and which belongs to it in common with most other human schemes of moral science,—a denial of the scripture statements respecting the guilt, depravity, and spiritual impotence and helplessness, of apostate man. This is a *germinating* error, to which almost every other might be traced, as a natural ramification.

There is not, perhaps, a single point of error, to which there is not some corresponding point in the variety of human corruption;—some principle or passion to which it presents a tempting gratification. One of the great leading tendencies of the Unitarian system is, the *exaltation of man.* It flatters the conscious dignity of his nature, by treating as "an old wives' fable" the doctrine of original depravity. It flatters his pride of intellect, by making Reason the arbitress of the dictates of Revelation. It flatters his pride of self-righteousness, by assuring him, that his own virtue is to procure his acceptance with God. By denying the deity and atonement

* Col. ii. 6—10.

of Christ, it releases the mind from the overwhelming impression of the infinite malignity of sin. By exhibiting "a God all mercy," softening down the "terrors of the Lord," and proclaiming an assurance, that none shall finally perish, but that all shall ultimately arrive at the enjoyment of everlasting happiness, it alleviates the sinner's apprehension of danger, makes him feel more at ease with God, as a Being whose countenance, instead of the frown of an offended Judge, wears towards all his creatures the smiles of paternal love, and who will not be severe to mark or to punish the frailties of his erring children. By denying the existence and influences of the Holy Spirit, it offers incense to the self-sufficiency of man, and to the omnipotence of human resolutions and human efforts, in working out a self-procured salvation.

If these things be so;—if Unitarianism be thus consonant with so many of the principles of corrupt nature, how comes it to pass that it does not meet with a more general reception? That its converts are comparatively few;—that, with not many exceptions, its preachers proclaim their doctrines to empty pews and echoing walls;—are matters of unquestionable notoriety. Why is it so? It is all owing, Unitarians will say, to the strength of early prejudice, to the natural predilection of the human mind for marvels and mysteries, and its consequent aversion to the simplicity of reason and truth.—That, in some instances, such causes do operate, it would be unreasonable to deny. That religion is, with too many, a matter of educational prejudice, and not of personal inquiry and personal experience, cannot, alas! admit of a doubt. And it is equally true, that some minds are fond of mystery, and like every thing the better the more mysterious it can be rendered.—But there are causes, I apprehend, of more extensive and powerful operation.

The first of these is, the very pretension of Unitarianism to be *the doctrine of the Bible.*—The whole system of its general principles, and particular tenets, stands so plainly and diametrically opposed to the clearest dictates of the sacred volume, that this of itself is enough to disgust ninety-nine in the hundred of all who are able to read. They shake their heads and say, "No, no; this will never do. True "or false, this is not the doctrine taught in the Bible:— "these men should honestly confess that they did not learn "their system there, and either abandon it, or renounce "revelation."—"Your system," might a Deist say to a Unitarian—"Your system is no doubt free of most of the "mysterious absurdities of orthodox theology. It is much "more rational and mánly, and approaches to the simplicity "of our own creed. But why impose upon us, and impose "upon yourselves, by calling it the system of the Bible? "Your eyes have been opened to see the falsehood and folly "of that contradictory jargon, that is received as gospel by "simple, or unhappily prejudiced, believers. One reason of "our rejecting the pretensions of the Bible as a Divine "revelation is, that it *does*, beyond all reasonable question, "contain the doctrines which you have had the good sense "to disavow. But, to be consistent, you must go a step "farther. Reject the book; and, giving up all your attempts "to torture it into consistency with your more rational "sentiments, frankly confess, that the doctrines which it "contains are enough to sink it, and all its evidences, "together."—There may be many things in a scheme of doctrine very palatable to human corruption, and, in so far, calculated to procure for it an extensive reception; while yet there is such a palpable and flagrant opposition between it and the book from which it professes to be taken, as at once to shock the judgment of the great majority of men, effectually

to counteract their wishes for its truth (if such they may secretly have formed), and to insure its general rejection.—On this ground, the speculative acquaintance with the contents of the Bible, which pervades Scotland (even although so extensively heartless and inefficacious), will form one strong barrier to the progress of Unitarian principles amongst its population.

But besides, there are wants in the condition of mankind, which Unitarianism does not meet. However reluctant men may be to acknowledge themselves utterly "lost," and "without strength;" yet there exists a prevailing consciousness of sin, and guilt, and condemnation. The gospel, in its exhibitions of an atoning Mediator, meets this natural feeling. There is an obvious congruity between the general idea of such a Saviour, and the secret dictates of conscience in the human breast. In some, these dictates, becoming powerful and awakening, lead the sinner, through the blessing of God, to a glad and grateful reception of the free salvation which is offered to him in the gospel. In others, they are repressed and resisted; the love of sin and of the world maintains the ascendency, and opposes the result to which a consciousness of guilt might otherwise lead. Yet, while sin and the world have the vote of the heart, this vote is given in opposition to certain secret intimations of the judgment. The understanding does not join from conviction in the course which the heart pursues, but is only kept at bay; and such persons, although, from unwillingness to "crucify the "flesh with its affections and lusts," they do not embrace the gospel, yet still perceive the harmony between the general idea of a guilty and condemned sinner, and the general idea of a mediating and atoning Saviour, and would consider any thing else than the gospel, as unsuitable and tantalizing.—

Even those (and they are not few), who attempt an unscriptural compromise between the freedom of gospel grace and dependence on their own fancied deservings, refusing, with the air of offended pride, to renounce the latter, while yet, along with them, they are fain to retain the merits of a Saviour, to serve as occasion may require, if, unfortunately, the balance should dip on the wrong side, and the scale of their sins outweigh the scale of their virtues;—even they will be the enemies of a system which entirely sweeps away from them this convenient resource.—And with regard to the immense multitude, the largest class of all, who pass through life with the vacuity of thoughtless indifference as to all that relates to religion, toiling in the businesses of this world, absorbed by its pleasures, or amusing themselves with its vanities, it is not likely that many of them will put themselves to the trouble of inquiry. They will pursue their wonted course; leave those whom it may concern to settle religious controversies; and, with all the magnanimity of infatuated folly, let eternity shift for itself.—When such persons *have* been attracted by the novelty and the imposing pretensions of Unitarianism, and have been induced to embrace the profession of its principles, we have heard Christians utter expressions of surprise and grief. There is, perhaps, little cause for the latter feeling; and there is still less for the former. Why should we be surprised that worldly men should embrace a system, which amalgamates so well with the world, and the adoption of which can hardly be said to imply any transition from one state, or from one course, to another? And as to grief—we may be grieved, indeed, that they have not embraced better principles, but we can hardly be grieved, surely, that they have not continued what they were. Even the excitement of thought is, I

should think, a favourable point gained. Subsequent consideration may, through the Divine influence, lead them to another mind.

But it is, above all, to the providence and the grace of God that we must look, for the prevention of the progress of error. The Unitarians have been very boastful of their "day "of small things" in Scotland. Long may it continue such! —long, I trust, it shall continue such. It is not of *their* doctrine that God hath said, "It shall accomplish that which "I please, and prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." It is not to *their* "planting," or to *their* "watering," that he has promised to "give the increase." They have sown their "handful," not of "corn," but of tares; and they are looking for a plentiful crop. But "the Lord of the harvest," we trust, will disappoint their expectations. Their seed wants the showers of Divine blessing; and never, either on the mountains or in the valleys of Caledonia, shall it "shake "with prosperous fruit." It shall be "as the grass on the "house-tops, which withereth before it groweth up; where- "with the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth "sheaves his bosom."

"The only material cause," it has been said,* "which is "likely to obstruct the progress of Unitarian principles in "Scotland, seems to be this; that, as many of those who "embrace Unitarian principles will be men more disposed "to inquire after truth, than to apply it steadily to practice "when found, and as the discussion of controverted questions "in theology has a natural tendency to weaken the devo- "tional feelings, the converts to Unitarianism may become "careless and indifferent about their religious duties, and "adopt habits of useless roving speculation, to the neglect of

*, Yates's Vind. of Unit. p. 274.

"their hearts and lives." In what the writer immediately adds, he is clearly in the right, and is entitled to credit for his candour:—"Instead of concealing this formidable evil, "it is infinitely wiser to bring it fully into view, so that we "may be on our guard against it." But the admission made in the first clause of the preceding extract, is particularly deserving of attention:—"*Many of those who embrace "Unitarian principles, will be men more disposed to inquire "after truth, than to apply it steadily to practice when found.*" This singular admission, it is presumed, must be founded either in the nature of the thing, or in past experience. And whether the one, or the other, or both of these, be the ground on which it rests, it seems evidently to imply, that there is something about the Unitarian system which recommends it more to the head of the roving speculatist, than to the heart of the humble and devout inquirer; to the *would-be* theologian, and the metaphysical amateur, rather than to the man who is "renewed in the spirit of his mind," and desirous to "perfect holiness in the fear of God."—In this view, the admission harmonizes remarkably with the style in which former Unitarian writers have expressed themselves:—

"It cannot be denied," says Dr. Priestley, "that many of "those who judge so truly concerning particular tenets in "religion, have attained to that cool unbiassed temper of "mind, in consequence of becoming more indifferent to "religion in general, and to all the modes and doctrines "of it."—"Men who are indifferent to the practice of "religion," says Mr. Belsham, "and whose minds, therefore, "are least attached to any set of principles, will ever be "the first to see the absurdity of a popular superstition; "and to embrace a rational system of faith."—And do not these admissions still correspond, in a remarkable manner,

with existing facts? Who are, in general, the converts to Unitarianism? Do they not still, as when Mr. Fuller published his comparative view of the Calvinistic and Socinian Systems, consist chiefly of "*a speculating sort of people among* "*professing Christians?*"—Where are the hardened sinners whose consciences it has awakened? Where are the profligates whom it has reclaimed? Where are the worldlings whom it has spiritualized? Where are the Jews, the Deists, the Infidels, whom it has brought to the faith and obedience of the truth? And, even with regard to those who have, from time to time, gone over to its adherents from the various denominations of professing Christians, what improvement, we may ask, has the transition produced? Has it increased their humility? Has it warmed and elevated their devotion? Has it purified their affections from the debasing alloy of the world, and made them more heavenly-minded? Has it enlivened their delight in communion with God, and heightened their attachment to the exercises of the closet, the family, and the sanctuary? Has it rendered them more thankful in prosperity, more resigned and patient in adversity? Has it enlarged their practical benevolence? Has it made them more "fervent in spirit" for the glory of God, and the good of men?—more "sober, just, holy, "temperate?"—better husbands and wives; better parents and children; better brothers and sisters; better masters and servants; better members of society;—in a word, *better men*, than they were before?—I make my appeal to the consciences of these converts to Unitarianism themselves, and, with all humility and affection, entreat them to examine themselves, and to compare, in their own experience, the respective tendencies of the system which they have renounced, and of that which they have espoused. And I make my appeal, at the same time, to all my fellow-Christians who have had any

opportunities for personal observation.—"Among the various "Socinian converts, have we ever been used to hear of any "remarkable change of life or behaviour, which a conversion "to their peculiar principles effected? I hope there are few "Calvinistic congregations in the kingdom, but what could "point out examples of persons among them, who, at the "time of their coming over to their doctrinal principles, came "over also from the course of this world, and have ever since "lived in newness of life. Can this be said of the generality "of Socinian congregations? Those who have had the "greatest opportunity of observing them, say the contrary. "Yea, they add, that the conversion of sinners to a life of „ holiness, does not appear to be their aim; that their concern „ seems to be, to persuade those who, in their account, have „ *too much* religion, that less will suffice, rather than to address "themselves to the irreligious, to convince them of their "defect."*

If the efficacy of Unitarianism, as an instrument of moral and spiritual improvement, is to be estimated by the effects which it is seen to produce amongst ourselves, we shall be at a loss for grounds to account for, or to justify, the recent eagerness of its proselyting spirit. Differences of *sentiment*, in the opinion of most Unitarians, are of little essential account in the matter of salvation; and conversion to the principles of Unitarianism has, it would appear, no such influence upon the converts as to make any material change for the better in their *character*. Whence, then,

* Fuller's "Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared, as to their Moral Tendency;" a work which cannot be too often or too strongly recommended to the attention of the reader; a work, to which the palm must still be assigned amongst the productions of its able and lamented Author; a work "to which," in the language of Dr. Johnson, respecting Lord Lyttleton's observations on the conversion of Paul, Unitarianism "has never yet been able to frame even a specious answer."

the active zeal of its friends? To what is this zeal directed? What valuable ends do they expect to accomplish by it? Of what mighty consequence is a mere change of sentiment and profession, if the change does not materially, if at all, affect, either the safety or the character of him who undergoes it? Those who hold the divinity and atonement of Christ, and the doctrine of acceptance with God through his merits and mediation, are consistent in their zeal, because they consider these Scripture truths as essentially connected with the salvation of sinners; because they can look around on their congregations, and, enumerating in their minds the various characters who "shall not inherit the kingdom "of God," can say with Paul, "Such were some of you; "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are "justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit "of our God;" and because they expect the same renovations of heart, and transformations of character, as the result of "the preaching of the cross," in "every kindred, and tongue, "and people, and nation."—But where are those trophies of *Unitarian* success—where those evidences of the Divine blessing upon their labours, by which they are incited to "compass sea and land to make one proselyte?"—We cannot allow them to go back for these to apostolic times; to take for granted the Unitarianism of the primitive church, to claim for their party all the early triumphs of the cross; and, on *this* ground, to exult in the anticipation of triumphs yet to come. The tree must be known by its *present* fruits. If these fruits are not the same with those which grew of old, we may be assured that Unitarianism is not a slip of the true vine. Wherever *that* has been planted, its fruits have been invariably the same.—What, in point of fact, have been the doctrines chiefly insisted upon by those who have followed the apostles in "turning the world upside down?"—Have

they been the points in which Unitarians and Trinitarians are agreed? Or have they not rather been those on which they are *toto cœlo* at variance? Have not the depravity, guilt, and condemnation of mankind, the deity and atonement of the Saviour, justification by grace through faith in his merits and sacrifice, and the enlightening and sanctifying agency of the Divine Spirit;—have not these, and such as these, been the great themes of preaching, wherever any material effects have been produced on the personal characters and the social condition of men? Has it not been that "preaching of the cross" which is, by Unitarians, as well as by the philosophers of this world, esteemed foolishness, that has all along proved "the power of God unto salvation?"

Unitarianism has been brought to the test of fact and experience, in what its advocates declare to have been its primitive simplicity:—and where, we again ask, is any thing resembling the wonderful changes which it is so confidently alleged to have effected "in the beginning of the "gospel?" Are its weapons now, as of old, "mighty through "God, to the pulling down of strong-holds, casting down "imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself "against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity "every thought to the obedience of Christ?" * It has as yet, indeed, only been tried at home—in Christian countries. Let it, then, be tried abroad. Carry it far hence unto the Heathen. Let active zeal send forth its missionaries to the regions of darkness and of the shadow of death. I will not ask for instantaneous and extensive revolutions in the views and characters of men; for altars overturned, temples deserted, and bonfires of magical books. These, I should be told, distinguished the days of miraculous

* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

evidence. But I *will* ask, first of all, for the manifestation of apostolic benevolence and apostolic zeal, amongst those who arrogate to themselves the exclusive possession of apostolic principles,—of the gospel in its original purity and simplicity. Paul's "spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city "(Athens) wholly given to idolatry." Let us see some stirrings of this deep concern for the glory of a dishonoured Deity, and of this melting compassion for the souls of deluded and perishing men. Can those principles be the same with Paul's, which allow the professors of them to sit still in listless apathy, while they view a world given to idolatry?—making no attempts themselves to turn men from idols to the living God, and deriding, as visionary enthusiasm, the missionary efforts of others?

It is useless to ask for the *effects* of such attempts, while the attempts themselves have not been made.—But the preaching of "Christ crucified"—the preaching of a Divine Redeemer, atoning for the guilt of men by the sacrifice of himself—*has* been tried, and has not been tried in vain. The effects produced have been the same in kind, although more limited in their extent, with those which resulted from the labours of the first preachers of the cross. The gospel has been proved "its own witness." It has found a testimony in the consciences, and has opened and entered the hearts of men of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. It has been "the rod of the Redeemer's "strength," by which he has established his reign "in the "midst of his enemies." At this moment, through the zealous exertions of his servants, who are fighting this "good fight of faith," the people are "falling under him" in willing subjection. Over many of those who were "filled "with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetous-"ness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit,

"malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, "proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to "parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without "natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing "the judgment of God, that they who commit such things "are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have "pleasure in them that do them"*—over many such, happily, we have reason to adopt the language of the apostle of the Gentiles, "God be thanked that ye *were* the servants "of sin:—but now, being made free from sin, and become "servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the "end everlasting life."†

In regard to external morals,—to the personal, domestic, and social virtues of life, I believe there are not a few amongst professed Unitarians, who are correct and exemplary. The same thing, however, may be said of every system, not excepting infidelity itself:—the outward characters of men being formed and fashioned by so many circumstances and considerations that have no connexion whatever with religious principle; and the natural sentiments of humanity and kindness, a high sense of honour, the maxims of a righteousness without which society could not hold together, and, in general, what has been termed the conventional morality of the world, frequently producing characters in no small degree engaging and creditable, in as far as the claims of fellow-creatures only are concerned, independently of the existence of such principle altogether.—It may further be remarked, that the moral characters of many of the Unitarians, perhaps of some of the best amongst them, have been formed previously to their embracing the sentiments of that party; and of such, the excellences,

* Romans i. 29—32. † Romans vi. 17, 22.

whatever they may be, are not fairly imputable to the influence of their new principles. But even as to them, and as to the body at large to which they have joined themselves, report speaks very falsely, if they be in general distinguished for that *godliness*, *devotion*, and *spirituality of mind*, which stand so prominent in the characters of the saints of holy writ. It were unreasonable, indeed, to expect that they should be thus distinguished, if what has been said by one of themselves be true, that "many of those who embrace Unitarian principles, "will be men more disposed to inquire after truth, than to "apply it steadily to practice when found."—"If Unitarians," adds the same writer, "in the midst of that joy which often "overpowers them upon the first breaking in of the light, "be careful not to split upon this rock; if they be as "anxious to improve their *hearts*, as to inform their *under-* "*standings*; if they not only strive after the attainment of "correct *ideas*, but attend yet more to the cultivation of the "devotional, the moral, and the sympathetic *feelings*, &c. &c.; "then Unitarianism will assuredly triumph over the united "opposition of prejudice, interest, and passion; it is gone "forth conquering, and to conquer."*—The admonitions thus tendered are excellent: but the supposition that makes them necessary, does not say much for the spiritual nature, or the regenerating influence, of Unitarianism. What sort of "*light*" must this be, the entrance of which into the mind exposes the *heart* to the danger of being forgotten? Of what description is this overpowering joy, which is so entirely unconnected with the *devotional* and the *moral feelings*, as to produce the imminent hazard of their being overlooked and neglected? Is it not the joy of a man of science upon a new discovery, rather than the joy of a sinner on finding a

* Yates's Vindication, p. 274.

Saviour? The light of the gospel is holy light; the joy which it inspires, holy joy. The truth as it is in Jesus makes its way to the heart, with gladdening, no doubt, but, at the same time, with humbling and purifying influence, at the same instant that it enters the understanding. It prostrates the soul in self-abased and grateful adoration. It fills the eyes with the mingled tears of penitential sorrow, and of sacred and animated delight,—the "peace of God that "passeth all understanding,"—"the joy of God's salvation." Instead of leaving the sinner, "in the midst of the joy that "overpowers him," in danger of forgetting that he has a heart to be rectified, as well as an understanding to be enlightened, "the entrance of God's word," while it "giveth light," is the invariable means of "renewing the spirit of the mind," and turning the heart to God.

It will not do to say, in reply to all this, that the danger supposed as to Unitarians was actually exemplified in the case of the converts from popery to protestantism at the time of the Reformation, "many of whom, it is alleged, were "notorious not only for a murderous spirit of persecution, "and for wild and furious rebellion against civil authority, "but for the general corruption and profligacy of their "manners."—"Were their principles," it is asked, "more "hostile to piety and purity of morals than the tenets of the "papists? Or shall we not rather look to the operation of "causes which endanger the character of all *converts*, and "which, therefore, ought to be cautiously guarded against, steadily faced, and vigorously combated?"* It is enough to answer,—without entering into any historical investigation of the nature and circumstances of the case referred to, or of the amount of truth in the statement of it,—that Trinita-

* Yates's Sequel to Vind. of Unit. chap. x.

rianism was not a peculiarity of protestantism, nor new at the Reformation; that conversion from the profession of popery to that of protestantism is not the conversion of which we speak; that a change of *opinion* without a change of *character* is not conversion at all; that the man who, while a papist, was corrupt and profligate, and who retains his corruption and profligacy when he becomes a protestant, might as well have remained what he was; and that the same thing is equally true of a trinitarian who becomes a unitarian, or of a unitarian who becomes a trinitarian, if in either case, the conversion be no more than a mere change of a speculative opinion in what is called theological science.

But to enlarge on the practical tendencies of the two systems of doctrine, would lead me to write another volume; and the ground has been pre-occupied to incomparably better purpose in the work of Mr. Fuller, before referred to. I shall conclude my remarks on this topic, with two short extracts from that admirable publication:—

"Let us examine more particularly what sort of people "they, in general, are, who are converted to Socinianism. "It is an object worthy of inquiry, whether they appear "to be modest, humble, serious Christians; such as have "known the plague of their own hearts; in whom tribulation "hath wrought patience, and patience, experience; such as "know WHOM they have believed, and have learned to count "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge "of Jesus their Lord; such as, in their investigation of "sentiments, have been used to mingle earnest and humble "prayer, with patient and impartial inquiry; such, in fine, "as have become as little children in their own eyes?—*If* "*they be*, it is a circumstance of consequence, not sufficient, "indeed, to justify their change of sentiments, but to render

" that change an object of attention. When persons of this " description embrace a new set of principles, it becomes " a matter of serious consideration, what could induce them " to do so. But *if they be not*, their case deserves but little " regard. When the body of converts to a system are mere " speculatists in religion, men of little or no seriousness, and " who pay no manner of attention to vital and practical " religion, it reflects neither honour on the cause they have " espoused, nor dishonour on that which they have rejected. " When we see persons of this stamp go over to the Socinian " standard, it does not at all surprise us; on the contrary, we " are ready to say, as the apostle said of the defection of some " of the professors of Christianity, in his day, ' *They went out* " *'from us, but they were not of us.'* "

" Will Dr. Priestly undertake to prove, that *a loose,* " *dissipated, and abandoned life, is a more general thing among* " *the Calvinists, than among their opponents?* I am persuaded " he will not. He knows that the Calvinists, in general, are " far from being a dissipated or an abandoned people, and " goes about to account for it; and that in a way that *shall* " *reflect no honour upon their principles.* ' Our moral conduct " ' (he observes) is not left at the mercy of our opinions; and " ' the regard to virtue which is kept up by those who maintain " ' the opinions above mentioned, is owing to the influence of " ' other principles implanted in our nature.'* Admitting this " to be true, yet one would think the worst principles will, " *upon the whole*, be productive of the worst practices. They " whose innate principles of virtue are all employed in coun- " teracting the influence of a pernicious system, cannot be " expected to form such amiable characters, as where those " principles are not only left at liberty to operate, but are

* Consid. on Diff. Opin. §. III.

" aided by a good system. It might, therefore, be expected,
" I say again, if our principles be what our opponents say
" they are, that a loose, dissipated, and abandoned life, would
" be a more general thing among us than among them.

" I may be told, that the same thing, if put to us, would
" be found equally difficult; or that, notwithstanding we
" contend for the superior influence of the Calvinistic system
" to that of Socinians, yet we should find it difficult to prove,
" that a loose, dissipated, and abandoned life, is a more
" general thing among Socinians, than it is among Calvinists.
" And I allow that I am not sufficiently acquainted with the
" bulk of the people of that denomination, to hazard an
" assertion of this nature. But if what is allowed by their
" own writers (who ought to know them) may be admitted as
" evidence, such an assertion might nevertheless be supported.
" 'Rational Christians are often represented (says Mr.
" 'Belsham) as indifferent to practical religion.' Nor does he
" deny the justice of this representation, but admits, though
" with apparent reluctance, that 'there has been some plausible
" 'ground for the accusation;' and goes about to account for
" it, as we have seen in Letter IV.; in such a way, however,
" *as may reflect no dishonour upon their principles.* The same
" thing is acknowledged by Dr. Priestley, who allows that
" '*a great number* of the Unitarians of the present age, are
" 'only men of good sense, and without much practical religion;'
" and that 'there is a greater apparent conformity to the
" 'world in them, than is observable in others.' Yet he also
" goes about to account for these things, as Mr. Belsham
" does, in such a way *as may reflect no dishonour upon their*
" *principles.* It is rather extraordinary, that when facts are
" introduced in favour of the virtue of the general body of the
" Calvinists, they are not denied, but accounted for in such
" a way, that their principles must share none of the *honour;*

"and when facts of an opposite kind are introduced in proof "of the want of virtue among Unitarians, they also are not "denied, but accounted for in such a way, that their prin- "ciples must have none of the *dis*honour. Calvinism, it seems, "must be immoral, though Calvinists be virtuous, and "Socinianism must be amiable, though Socinians be vicious. "I shall not inquire whether these very opposite methods of "accounting for facts be fair or candid. On this, the reader "will form his own judgment: it is enough for me that the "facts themselves are allowed."*

* The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared, &c. Sixth Edition, Letter IV. pp. 57, 58, and Letter VI. pp. 110—112.

NOTES.

NOTE A, page 10.

The expressions in which the apostle Paul has been thought to disclaim inspiration on the particular point of which he is at the time treating, occur chiefly in the seventh chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians.—I propose in this note briefly to examine them.

The first remark that naturally occurs to the mind, with regard to the sentiment in question, is, that it is quite *unaccountable;* and that, therefore, it is *a priori* very *improbable.*—The general inspiration of Paul is frequently affirmed by himself: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 16. xiv. 37: and it is asserted by Peter, when he classes Paul's writings with "*the other Scriptures,*" 2 Peter iii. 15, 16.—This inspiration was a fulfilment of the promise made to the apostles by their Master—"When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into *all truth,*" &c. John xvi. 13.—Indeed the inspiration of Paul cannot be denied by any who believe the N. T. to be the word of God.

How strange, then, the supposition, that in giving directions to the people of God, this inspiration, on his arriving at the subject treated of in 1 Cor. vii. should have been all at once withdrawn!—nay, withdrawn and restored, and withdrawn and restored again,—alternately coming and going, on the same subject, within the compass of a single chapter!—Or, again, that the apostle should not himself have been sure whether he was writing by inspiration or not!—as some of his expressions might, to a superficial reader, seem to indicate.

This improbability, great in itself, is strengthened by the consideration that the apostle is writing on subjects, respecting which *special inquiry had been made at him, as an apostle of Christ, by a Christian Church.*—This being the case, surely the gracious Head of the church would not leave them without an answer *from himself,*—would not leave them ignorant of *his own will;* when it was this they were desirous to know from his apostle, that they might conform their conduct to it.—Are the matters treated of in this chapter of so trivial a nature, as to be unworthy of being settled by inspiration? Far from it. They are matters of *very high importance;* certainly of far superior moment to many other things (relative for instance to external order) for which the Holy Spirit has given minute directions.

Besides, on the supposition of Paul's disclaiming inspiration in the expressions in question,—it is impossible to fix to what extent, in the context, these expressions, when so understood, are to be considered as

applying:—what we are to deem the will of Christ, and what the mere private opinion of a fellow-man.—It has, as I have hinted in the text, been used as an argument for the *general* inspiration of Paul's epistles, that he himself thus specifies the exceptions, marking its suspension, on particular occasions. No doubt this would be a proof of his faithfulness and integrity. But the difficulties and evils attending this interpretation, far more than counterbalance any value possessed by this argument.

Let us examine a little the expressions themselves, and try their real import.

Verse 6. " But I speak this by permission, not of commandment."

The obvious meaning of this is, not that he spoke what he refers to as a thing he was *permitted* to say, but not *commanded* to say:—for this, in fact, would amount to nothing. Because *permission* to say any thing, either of doctrine or of precept, necessarily supposes what *is* said to be *the mind of the Lord*, or *of the Spirit*;—he could not be *permitted* to say what was contrary to that mind.—The meaning is, that what he said was matter of *permission, as to the persons whom he addressed*, and not of *command*, or *positive injunction*. " I say this *in the way of permission*, not of *commandment*."—(Compare, for an expression of the same description, 2 Cor. viii. 8.)—He refers to the general subject, as stated in verse 1. " It is good for a man not to marry;"—and informs them, that he had *no positive command* to give them on this matter, either to marry or to remain single; but a *permission* to do the one or the other, according to personal and relative circumstances.

Verse 10. " *And unto the unmarried, I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband*:" compared with verse 12. " *But to the rest speak I, not the Lord; If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away*," &c.

The *commands* of Christ and his apostles are in one view, and that the most important, *the same*. Luke x. 16. 1 John iv. 6. 1 Thess. iv. 8. 1 Cor. xiv. 37.—Yet there is a distinction between sayings delivered by Jesus himself personally, when he was upon earth, and sayings delivered in his name by his apostles. Paul enjoins the elders of the church at Ephesus, Acts xx. 35. to " remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—This, delivered as a truth by the Spirit through Paul, would have had the same authority as it derived from having been uttered by Christ himself in person. Yet the circumstance of its having been so uttered is evidently introduced with the intention of giving it additional persuasive influence.

This seems to be the distinction in the passage under consideration:—" I command,—yet not I only, although an inspired apostle; but the Lord himself gives commandment as to this."—See Matth. v. 32. and Luke xvi. 18.—It is a pretty strong confirmation of this view, that in the case mentioned in verse 10, it is the fact that a command actually *was* given by Jesus personally; whereas, in the case stated in verse 12, there was *none*.

—Besides, as was already hinted, how can we suppose that in a matter confessedly of great moment, which had perplexed and agitated the minds of the believers at Corinth, they should be left with nothing more than the private opinion and advice of an individual, which they might or might not adopt, just as they saw reason to concur with, or to differ from him, in judgment. This could not settle their minds, or fix their practice.—We must surely consider him as speaking in the character of one who "*had the Spirit of Christ*," chap. ii. 16. and as delivering a precept *in addition* to what *the Lord* had himself enjoined, when on earth. And accordingly, it is *in continuation of the same subject*, that he uses the *authoritative language* of verse 17. "*so ordain I, in all churches;*" language peculiarly *apostolical;*—evidently the language of one *having authority*—the authority of his Divine Master.

Verse 25. "*Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*"

"I have no commandment of the Lord." He does not mean that he had received no commandment from the Lord, to enjoin upon them; but that this was a case in which, as in the one before-mentioned, there was no commandment of the Lord on record. I think the language in the latter part of the verse strongly corroborates this view:—"I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be *faithful*."—*Faithfulness* has reference to a trust or commission. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. Acts xx. 27. On the present occasion, he gives *a judgment*, or *sentence*, (γνώμην δὶ δίδωμι) as one who had obtained mercy to be *faithful*—that is, to his apostolic commission; the nature of which faithfulness is described in one of the passages just referred to as consisting in "not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God."—The very mention of *faithfulness*, and not of wisdom, experience, prudence, or sagacity, appears to show that what he does deliver he delivers *in his apostolic capacity.*

Verse 26. "*I suppose, therefore, that this is good for the present distress,*" &c.

The word rendered "*I suppose*" has for its primary signification, *I establish by law, I enact*—(νομίζω, propriè *lege sancio, leges fero*, a νόμος, *lex.* Schleusner.) Its more extended signification is, *I judge, I reckon, I account*, &c. &c. It does not imply the *uncertainty* which we attach to our word *suppose.* It expresses here *decided judgment*, the judgment of an apostle, of one who "had the mind of Christ."

Verse 40. "*But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.*"

The observations made on verse 25, apply to the former part of this verse.—The latter part, so far from being favourable to the opinion that Paul in this chapter disclaims inspiration, is, in my mind, most decisive against it.

1. We surely must not for a moment suppose, that the apostle did not

know, or was not sure, whether he was inspired or not. This was a matter which could not possibly be doubtful. Such a supposition is pregnant with absurdity in itself, and leads to the fatal consequence of completely and universally unsettling our confidence in inspiration. If these writers could be uncertain of their inspiration at one time, they might be mistaken in deeming themselves inspired at another;—so that no evidence of their general inspiration could ever give us the assurance of its universality, even in what they themselves thought to be of Divine authority, or impart full confidence to our minds as to any thing at all which they have delivered.

2. Besides;—for what end does the apostle introduce this at all? When he says—"*and I think also that I have the Spirit of God*," he surely intended to give *authority* and *weight* to what he had been saying. If it has not *this* meaning, it will be difficult to say what it means.—If therefore we believe that Paul *really had* the Spirit of God at all, we must conclude that the judgment which he here pronounces is the judgment of the Spirit. For it would obviously have been nothing to his purpose, to introduce his "having the Spirit of God" on *other* subjects, if it had indeed been the case that he was giving only his private, uninspired, unauthoritative opinion on *this*. The very circumstance, then, of his thus referring at all to his Inspiration, clearly shows, that it was more than his mere personal opinion and advice that he intended to express.

3. The verb translated "*I think*," does not, by any means, of itself, imply suspicion or doubt;—but as naturally means *thinking with confidence,—conviction,—knowledge*. (See Schleusner's and Parkhurst's Lexicons, on the verb δοκέω.) Compare John v. 39.

4. The language of the apostle is a gentle, modest way of expressing a fact, of which he was fully confident. And in this view, it is worthy of remark, it derives peculiar beauty from the circumstance of his apostolic inspiration having been called in question at Corinth, by the false teachers and their adherents. It is as if he had said:—"Whatever some may say, or may insinuate, *I think* I have the Spirit of God:—*I think* I surely gave you sufficient evidence of this—did I not? Have you any reason to refuse my authority? I tender to you these directions *in love:* and *I think*, from 'the signs of an apostle which were wrought amongst you,' I may also consider myself as authorized to '*enjoin* upon you that which is convenient.'"

As for II Cor. xi. 17. the only other passage in Paul's writings which has been thought to countenance the sentiment of his sometimes disclaiming inspiration, I need not dwell upon it. A number of the general observations already made, apply to it in all their force:—and the expression "*after the Lord*"—("That which I speak, I speak it not *after the Lord*, but as it were foolishly in this confidence of boasting,")—evidently refers not to the *authority* of the Lord, but to his *example*. The "glorying" to which the apostle was "compelled" by necessitating circumstances, he avows his consciousness, was hardly, at least in appearance, accordant with the example of him who "sought not his own glory."—If Paul means more than this—

if he means to disclaim inspiration,—when does his inspiration recommence? —at what particular place does he begin again to speak by the Spirit of God?

Upon the whole, I am not satisfied, that there are any passages of his writings in which this Apostle can be fairly considered as disclaiming inspiration.

NOTE B, page 37.

These remarks might be extended further. The argument is, in some parts of it, not only recondite, and unobvious to superficial observers, but discernible only by the aid of such enlarged philosophical knowledge, as in many states of society does not exist. The proof is not, on this account, the less conclusive. But, amidst the science which we ourselves possess, we are ever in danger when we are reasoning on such subjects, of forgetting the ignorance of other places, and of preceding times; and of heedlessly considering an argument as common to mankind, which depends on knowledge that is in the possession of comparatively very few. This observation may be illustrated by the following extract from Dr. Paley, in which he argues the unity of Deity from the simplicity and uniformity of astronomical laws:—"Of the unity of Deity, the proof is, the *uniformity* of plan observable in the universe. The universe itself is a system: each part either depending upon other parts, or being connected with other parts by some common law of motion, or by the presence of some common substance. One principle of gravitation causes a stone to drop towards the earth, and the moon to wheel round it. One law of attraction carries all the planets about the sun. This philosophers demonstrate. There are also other points of agreement amongst them, which may be considered as marks of the identity of their origin, and of their common Author. In all are found the conveniency and stability derived from gravitation. They all experience the vicissitudes of days and nights, and changes of season. They all, at least Jupiter, Mars, and Venus, have the same advantages from their atmosphere as we have. In all the planets the axes of rotation are permanent. Nothing is more probable, than that the same attracting influence, acting according to the same rule, reaches to the fixed stars: but if this be only probable, another thing is certain, viz. that the same element of light does. The light from a fixed star affects our eyes in the same manner, is refracted and reflected according to the same laws, as the light of a candle. The velocity of the light is also the same as the velocity of the light of the sun reflected from the satellites of Jupiter. The heat of the sun, in kind, differs nothing from the heat of a coal fire." &c. Paley's Nat. Theol. chap. xxv.——The reasoning in this passage, like the reasoning in general of the same interesting work, is logical and conclusive. But it must strike every reader, that the principal facts on which it rests belong to an advanced period of philosophical discovery; that the argument, in truth, could not have been constructed as it is, before the time of Sir Isaac Newton.—It is one advantage, and none of the least, arising from the

progressive advancement of the science of nature, that it throws the light of illustration and evidence on subjects which ought to be of all others the most interesting to the human mind. Yet, if arguments like that above quoted were necessary to ascertain from nature the great doctrine of the Divine unity, we could hardly wonder at the prevailing ignorance of this doctrine amongst the mass of mankind. And more than this,—infidel philosophers, it may be remarked, have no cause to triumph in such reasonings, as if they were fair criteria of the length to which the light of nature, on these subjects, is capable of carrying the human mind. They are the reasonings of a man, possessing and believing Divine revelation; previously satisfied from *this* source, of the truth of those views of Deity which he is engaged in demonstrating from *another*. There is a most material difference between a person in this situation, whose object is to point out the conformity between the decisions of revelation and the dictates of reason, and the man who is left to grope his way by the light of reason alone. To those, indeed, who candidly consider the use made, by philosophers who were destitute of revelation, of that portion of science which they *did* possess, it will, perhaps, be matter of more than doubt, as I confess it is with myself, whether, supposing the progress of science the same as it has been, but the light of revelation still withheld, such reasonings as those of Dr. Paley and others would ever have come to be framed. In whatever degree we may be indebted to Christianity for the *discovery* of the facts on which these reasonings are chiefly founded—(and when I consider the influence which the progress of Christian truth has uniformly had, in promoting the advancement of learning, and of improvement of every kind, I am disposed to think the obligation is not small)—I am fully satisfied that we owe, in a great decree, to this cause, the *right application* of the facts, when discovered, to points of religious truth. The striking fact, that the progress of science, apart from revelation, produced, in those nations where it was most remarkable, no improvement in religious knowledge and worship, gives no inconsiderable weight to the doubts which I have just expressed.

NOTE C, page 43.

In opposition to the latter part of this assertion, there have been produced the examples of Rehoboam, of Artaxerxes, of Christ, and of Paul.—With regard to Paul, it is sufficient to observe, that when he uses the plural pronouns, *We, us, our*, in "expressing his own feelings and condition," he may naturally be supposed to include fellow-labourers, as participating in those feelings and in that condition; such fellow-labourers as those whom he frequently associates with himself at the commencement of his letters:—"Paul and Sosthenes," 1 Cor. i. 1.:—"Paul and Timothy," 2 Cor. i. 1.:—"Paul and Timotheus," Phil. i. 1.:—"Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus," 1 Thess. i. 1.; 2 Thess. i. 1. &c.

As to the instance adduced of Jesus Christ using the style in question,

viz. John iii. 11. " *We* speak that which *we* know, and testify that which *we* " have *seen*, and ye receive not *our* witness;"—it is far from being a clear and decisive one. When Christ, in this same sentence, addresses *an individual* by the pronoun *ye*, evidently including *others* along with *Nicodemus*, is it perfectly certain that in using the pronoun *we*, he does not include *others* along with himself?—Some accordingly understand him as associating with his own the testimony of the Baptist:—others conceive that he includes the testimony of the Father and of the Spirit: (compare John viii. 18.: xv. 26.):—while others still, think it more simple and natural to interpret the language as that of authority. (Doddridge, Note in loc.) Something forcible might be said in support of each of these explanations: and, at the risk of having prejudice imputed to me as the source of my indecision, I profess myself at a loss to determine which of them should have the preference.

As to the case of *Rehoboam;* it is alleged, that whereas, in consulting the *old* men, he uses the singular number—" How do ye advise that I may " answer this people?"—" When he consults the *young* men, he assumes a " higher tone, and says, ' What counsel give ye, that *we* may answer this " ' people?' "—Now this seems to me far from consistent with the character of the foolish and self-willed prince. The following appears a much more likely explanation of the change in his expression. Rehoboam was aware of the prudence of these aged counsellors of his father, and had a pretty shrewd guess of the kind of advice he was likely to get from them. He did not like the old greybeards, and contemned the moderation of their counsels. He had more of the imperious self-will, than of the modest diffidence of youth. It is natural, therefore, to suppose, that, if he was stately to either, it should have been to these old men. With his young companions, who were brought up with him, with whom he was in habits of intimacy, who knew his character, and were aware what kind of advice would be most agreeable,—he probably, instead of assuming "*a higher tone*," assumed the style of *familiarity*, associating them with himself, and speaking of the answer he should give to the people, as given by *them* as well as by himself, because given *by their counsel*.—The reader may judge for himself between the two views.

The only remaining instance is that of *Artaxerxes*, Ezra iv. 18. " The " letter which ye sent unto *us* hath been plainly read before me."—Although it is a circumstance somewhat singular that the Royal style should be assumed and relinquished within the compass of this short sentence, I shall admit this to be a solitary instance in the Bible, of the plural number being used by a king, when speaking in his own person; but how far it is a " sufficiently clear and decisive one," the reader must be left to judge, and to determine as he will between the *us* and the *me*, which are both used in the same sentence. At all events, if it were ever so decisive in itself, it does not belong to the days of Moses.—*Valeat quantum valere potest.*

NOTE D, page 46.

As a farther reply to our inferences from the plural form of the Hebrew Name for God, it has been alleged that the whole mystery is resolved by the following rule of grammar, which is affirmed to express a common idiom of that language:—"Words that express dominion, dignity, majesty, are "commonly put in the plural."

On this it may be observed, 1st. The rule, supposing it to *be* one, is, beyond all doubt, stated in terms by far too general. If it were a rule of any thing like *common* application, one should expect to find it in all the Hebrew Grammars. Now, this is not the case. In various respectable grammars of the language it has no place. This surely is somewhat strange as to a *common rule of syntax*, or well ascertained idiom.

2dly. All the instances adduced of the application of this rule, *in which the reference is to Jehovah*, must, of course, be set aside as not at all in point. It is from these that *we* derive our evidence: and, therefore, to bring forward these, as exemplifications of a rule, which is alleged to subvert this evidence, is to beg the question in dispute. The rule, if established, must be established from other cases.—Now the particular words enumerated in support of the rule, in Wilson's Grammar, are, ALEIM, *Gods*, ADNIM, *Lords*, BOLIM, owners, *Husbands*, *Masters*:—and the particular exemplification of it which he adduces, is Isa. liv. 5. "For thy "Maker (Heb. Makers) is thy Husband (Heb. Husbands) Jehovah (God) "of hosts is his name," &c.—one of the very passages on which we ground our inference: and which, therefore, can never go to disprove that inference, until it has been otherwise shown, that the phraseology is common in Hebrew syntax, and that there is nothing at all peculiar in the case of its application to Jehovah. The remark applies to all passages similarly circumstanced.

3dly. If the rule were one of *common* application, we might reasonably expect to find frequent instances of all the words mentioned by Wilson occurring in the plural, with a singular application. Yet the only instance of BOL, when it signifies *a husband* (and indeed of any of the different Hebrew words so translated in our common version), occurring in the plural, so far as I have been able to discover, is Isa. liv. 5. already quoted, in which the application is to *Jehovah*.—As to the same word, when used to signify *a master* or *owner*, the instances of its occurrence, when considered as exemplifications of *dominion*, *dignity*, and *majesty*, are somewhat curious. It is applied, Exod. xxi. 29, 34. xxii. 10—13. to the "*owner*," of an ox, or an ass, or a sheep; and in Isa. i. 3. to the "*master*" of an ass: in which places it is in the plural number. I am not sure that the plural form of it occurs in this acceptation any where else. There is a high degree, no doubt, of *dominion*, *dignity*, and *majesty*, in being the proprietor of an ox, or an ass, or a sheep; a degree eminently worthy of a departure from the ordinary established principles of language to express it. For my own part,

since, throughout the context of the passages referred to, the word, *when not in construction with the pronoun suffix*, is in the *singular number*, and only assumes an apparently *plural* form, when *in* such construction (a variation not readily accounted for on the principles of the *rule* in question, the *dominion* of the master over his ox or his ass, and his *dignity* as its possessor, continuing the same); I should think it more simple and reasonable to conclude, that Boli is used as a singular form of the noun, when in these circumstances of regimen. The full plural form Bolim (בעלים) never occurs in a singular, but always in a plural sense. This conjecture is supported by the authority of Gussetius. In his *Commentarii Linguæ Ebraicæ*, in a long and ingenious defence of the argument for a plurality of persons in the Godhead from the plural form of Elohim, he says:—"Nam ad id allegantur dictiones Boli, Adoni, constructæ sic aut cum affixis; sed dubitari potest annon sint vere singulares, quibus י, ex proprio quodam ingenio (ut præpositioni אלי אל) accrescat: (quod etiam infra ita se habere ostendatur:) hic autem, nullum de nominis Aleim pluralitate dubium est."—*Gussetii. Comm. Ling. Ebr.* p. 51. Amstel. 1702.—Wilson himself (p. 152 of his grammar) mentions the words for *Father*, *Brother*, and *Father-in-law*, as assuming Iod before the affixes; אביך *thy Father*, אחיו *his Brother*, חמיה *her Father-in-law*. May not Bol be another instance of the same kind?—[I have since observed that Dr. Smith takes this very ground. See vol. I. p. 354. I am happy to find a suggestion which, from diffidence in my own acquaintance with Hebrew, I threw out with hesitation, supported by so high an authority.] In a note, too, page 264, Wilson says:—"Iod is often added to prepositions and adverbs, *euphoniæ causa*." May not this be the case with other words besides?

4thly. Had the rule in question been a *common* idiom of the language, we might very reasonably have expected to find it in application, in the case of such words as King, Prince, Ruler, Priest, and many others of a similar description, which convey the ideas of dominion, dignity, and majesty, surely much more impressively than the word used for the owner or master of an ox or an ass. No such instances, however, can be adduced.

5thly. While the *commonness* of this rule or idiom is far from being established by the facts in the practice of the language, I almost wonder that it should not:—because it appears to me, that an idiom of this kind would find an origin so natural, in the very circumstance of the name of the One God in three persons having a plural form. In Him are concentrated all the ideas we can form, and infinitely more, of dominion, dignity, and majesty. And, in these circumstances, it might have been highly natural for the Hebrews, to give a plural termination to other words in their language, expressive of similar qualities and attributes.

The last of these observations is applicable, with particular force, to the case of *false gods*. It is surely not at all a surprising thing, that when the plural name has been applied to the true God, it should be used also in application to the idols of the heathen. There is nothing more wonderful

in the name being so used *in the plural form*, than in its being so used *at all*. The same principle which accounts for the name GOD being given to heathen Deities *at all*, will equally well account for its being given to them in the particular form in which it is applied to the true God.—"We know "that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but "one." Yet the name of God is given to them in the Scriptures, in accommodation to the false conceptions and customary phraseology of their deluded worshippers. We never think of inferring that idols in general possess divinity, from their being called *Gods*;—and neither do we infer, on the same principle, plurality in the particular idol, from the plural name of the One God being used in speaking of it.—The circumstance of the plural name being applied to individual idols, does not, therefore, by any means, *show the futility* of our reasoning; because, if the name was first given to the true God, and then transferred in its application to false Gods, the cause of its assuming the plural form in its *primary* application, may, after all, have been what we allege, the threefold distinction in the Divine Unity. —And, if these remarks be well founded, the reason which accounts for the use of the plural name of God, when a false Deity is spoken of, will, of course, account also for the occurrence, on such occasions, of any peculiarities of syntactical phraseology which arise out of it.

It is on a similar principle to that here adopted, that Dr. Smith accounts for the occasional application of the words Aleim and Alei, Adnim and Adni, to inferior beings, with a singular reference.—"We must now take "up the case of *Adonim*, *Adoni*, and *Adonai* (if it be a plural;) and of *Elohim* "and *Eloh*. The problem is, to account for their application to inferior "beings with a singular reference. This, I think, is solved by regarding it "as a case of the well-known fact in the formation of all languages, that "particular terms are made general, or that derivative meanings are "gradually deduced from the primary and proper one, by dropping the more "specific parts of the original idea, and retaining those which are more "general. Thus we may suppose these words to have been, in their "primary acceptation, attached to the Supreme Being; and that the plural "form having grown into established use, it came to be transferred to those "secondary applications which in time arose, regarding *only* the ideas of "sovereignty and supremacy, and dropping that of plurality. Hence "*Adonim* became an appellation for an earthly lord, and *Elohim* for a false "deity, or any other application of it to which the principles that modify "language might lead; though, with respect to *Elohim*, we shall find that the "instances of its application to a singular object are extremely few indeed. "It is surely more reasonable to derive the few and inconsiderable instances "of an anomaly from *the capital example* which stands out in every page "of the Old Testament, than to consider IT as subordinate to them.

"But the fact which principally requires our attention, is the constant "use of *Elohim*, to designate the one and only God: and this in the "language of the patriarchs and prophets who 'spake as they were moved

" ' by the Holy Spirit.' It is not a little remarkable that such a circum-
" stance should exist in the sacred books of a people who were separated
" from all other nations for this express object, that they should bear a
" public and continual protest against polytheism; a people, whose whole
" system of religious, political, and domestic usages was calculated, with
" consummate prudence and wisdom, to be a perpetual preservative from
" polytheistic notions: a people who were charged by the Eternal God, to
" destroy every statue, structure, and grove, that might recall the memory
" of idolatrous rites, and to extirpate every thing that could be extirpated,
" which had been associated with idolatry, or might be converted into an
" instrument of its revival or its slightest palliation; who were enjoined to
" abolish every name of city, village, or place, which was compounded with
" the name of a Heathen deity, and to substitute new appellations; who
" were not even to pronounce those names unless necessity compelled;* it
" is, we may well say, not a little remarkable, that, in the sacred books of
" such a people, books whose very words, in many cases at least, were
" selected and dictated by the inspiration of Jehovah, the ordinary name
" and style of the only living and true God, should be in a *plural* form.—
" Did some strange and insuperable necessity lie in the way? Was the
" language so poor, that it could furnish no other term? Or if so, could
" not the wisdom of inspiration have suggested a new appellative, and have
" for ever abolished the hazardous word?—None of these reasons existed.
" The language was rich and copious.† The names of the Deity in general
" and constant use were more numerous than in either of the beautiful
" languages of classical antiquity, or in the most cultivated tongues of
" modern Europe. Besides that 'glorious and fearful Name JEHOVAH,' the
" appropriated and unique style of the True God, and besides other
" unexceptionable names, there was, as we have before said, the singular
" form ELOAH, the very word in question. There was no shadow of
" necessity, difficulty, or even inducement for the adoption of a phraseology,
" which, *on Unitarian principles*, every candid mind must confess, can with
" difficulty, if at all, be defended from the charge of pernicious example
" and very dangerous tendency."—Script. Test. Vol. I. pp. 355—357.

The following is the conclusion to which Gousset draws his argument, in the learned work before referred to: " Ex his sequitur pluralem de Deo " locutionem propriè ac in tota vi sua sumendam, ut idiomatis Ebraicæ " linguæ obtemperetur; ideoque fatendum esse illam pluralitatem in Deo " disertissimè et validissimè asseri." *Comm. Ling. Ebr.* p. 52.—" From " these considerations it follows, that the plural form of speech concerning " God, is to be taken strictly and in its full force, if we would comply with " the idiom of the Hebrew tongue; and that therefore it ought to be

* See Deut. xii. 13. Exod. xxiii. 13.

† Judging of it not from the remains of the proper Hebrew alone, of which we have only the Old Testament, but from its cognate dialects, especially the Arabic.

" acknowledged, that by this phraseology, plurality in Deity is most distinctly " and strongly affirmed."—In the same connexion he expresses himself in these remarkable words:—" At inquis, pluralitati isti obstat Dei natura. " Ego, contra, quî scis? plus valet locutio Dei qui scit, quam ratiocinatio " tua, qui nescis. Regeris, sunt aliæ causæ pluralis locutionis. Ego repono, " propria et naturalis ejus causa est rerum insignitarum pluralitas: ex ea " venire solet pluralis forma nominis, nec efficaciori modo illa indicari " potuisset quam locutione ista et diserta et solenni. Omnis ergo humilis " verbi Dei discipulus, quid ille dicat, bona fide, excipere studens acquiescat." *Ibid.* p. 52. " But you will say, This plurality is inconsistent with the " nature of God. I ask, in return, How do you know that? The decla- " ration of God, *who knows*, is of more weight, than your reasoning, *who do* " *not know*. There are other causes, you retort, of a plural form of speech. " I answer, its proper and natural cause is plurality in the things signified. " It is from *this* that the plural form of a noun usually arises; nor could it " have been indicated in a manner more effectual than by this description " of phrase, at once elegant and consistent with use. Let every humble " learner, therefore, of the word of God, settle it in his mind, to receive, in " sincerity and truth, whatever he may dictate."

NOTE D, page 51. (Properly E.)

It has been alleged that Paul only expresses in one sentence three devout wishes for his fellow-Christians, one relating to the favour of Christ, the other to the love of God, and the third to their participation in spiritual blessings.—I must leave it to the reader's own mind to judge, whether this be not evading a difficulty by the mere substitution of different terms, and whether these " devout wishes" be not essentially a prayer. I should still reckon it a waste of words to set about proving it.—But I must take notice of a parallel passage which has been adduced in proof of the contrary. It is 1 Cor. xvi. 23, 24. " The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus."—Now with regard to this passage, there are two considerations which place it entirely out of parallelism with the other. *In the first place*, the two verses are *two distinct sentences*. Paul is not associated in them with Jesus Christ in the same manner in which Jesus Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit are associated in 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The two sentences are distinct, and require to be interpreted accordingly. So that the inference which has been drawn, that " if the conclusion of the second Epistle, in which Jesus Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit, are mentioned in conjunction, proves the divinity of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit, the conclusion of the *first* Epistle, in which Paul is in like manner associated with Jesus Christ, proves the divinity of Paul," is a conclusion which the comparative structure of the two passages does not at all warrant:—especially when it is considered, that when Paul says—" My love be with you all," he adds " *in Christ Jesus*;" intimating that his love to them was on account, or for the sake of, Christ,—and that in the

verse immediately preceding he had pronounced a solemn anathema, in terms which we can hardly bring our minds to associate with a fellow-man, a mere human prophet—" If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha!"

But, *secondly:* There is another respect in which the parallel necessarily fails.—When Paul says, " My love be with you all in Christ Jesus," he cannot be considered as uttering *a prayer*, or even as expressing a *wish*, or *desire*. His words relate to feelings of which he was at the moment conscious in his own bosom, and contain a *declaration* of his affectionate regard and attachment to the believers at Corinth. This discrepancy in the sense renders the separation of the sentences still more complete, and every attempt to unite them the more vain.—In the other case, on the contrary, there is evidently the utterance of a *wish*, a *desire*, a *prayer*,—of *one* prayer, in *one* sentence, consisting of *three distinct yet connected parts*.—It may gratify the reader, to hear the comment of *Faustus Socinus himself* on this alleged parallel. It is to be found in his Disputation with Francis Davidis on the invocation of Christ. His opponent had said, " Imo et ipsum " Paulum nos invocare oportet, contra mentem et voluntatem ipsius, " qui sibi talem tribui honorem noluit: I enim Cor. xvi. inquit, charitas " mea sit cum omnibus vobis." To this Socinus (who, although holding Jesus Christ to be *a mere man*, most strangely argued, not for the *duty* indeed, but for the *liberty* of Christians to invoke or pray to him, on principles which we may hereafter notice)—to this Socinus replies: —" *In illis* verò, *Charitas mea sit cum omnibus vobis in Christo Jesu*, " reponis ex tuo sensu verbum *sit*. In textu enim legitur, *Charitas mea* " *cum omnibus vobis in Christo Jesu*. Verisimilius verò multum videtur, " subaudiendum esse hoc loco verbum *Est*, quam *Sit;* ut sit sensus—*Diligo* " *vos omnes in Christo Jesu;* id est, (ut explicat auctor eruditissimarum " illarum litteralium annotationum in Novo Testamento a Roberto Steph. " anno 1545 Lutetiæ edito, seu mavis in Bibliis Vatabli) *Diligo vos omnes* " *propter Christum*, vel quod Christi sitis. Qui sensus est planissimus et " appositissimus. Quòd si verbum *sit* subaudias, vix conveniens sententia " elici inde poterit; nisi dicimus, Paulum precare ut ament se mutuo in " Christo Jesu, ea charitate qua ipse præditus erat." " But in those words " ' *my love be with you all in Christ Jesus*,' you must throw out from your " interpretation the verb *be*. For in the original text we read simply, ' *my* " ' *love with you all in Christ Jesus:*' and it seems much more likely that *is* " should be supplied, than *be*, so as to make the sense ' *I love you all in* " ' *Christ Jesus;*' that is, *I love you all for Christ's sake*, or, *because ye* " *are Christ's;* which is a sense most simple and apposite. Whereas, if you " supply the verb *be*, it is not easy to make out a suitable meaning, unless " we suppose Paul to pray, that they might mutually love one another, with " the same affection wherewith he himself was inspired."

With regard to the other phrase, " the communion of the Holy Spirit," it will come more fully before us afterwards. I shall at present advert to

one objection only against our inference. "The communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" implies (it is alleged) "that the Holy Spirit does "not in this instance signify God, or any person. What can possibly be "intended by the *communion of God?* Is God divided? Can we *partake* "of God, or of any *person?* No; but we may partake of *powers, energies,* "and *influences;* we may enjoy a communion of *spiritual gifts.*"—"We "may enjoy a communion OF gifts WITH persons: but a *participation of a* "*person* is an idea which cannot enter the mind."—But the Apostle Paul was not so scrupulous. He speaks of Christians as "being made *partakers of Christ.*" Here is *participation of a person;* and the phrase surely expressed an idea that was *in* his own mind, and was intended to "*enter the minds*" of those to whom he wrote. The expression is never imagined to disprove the *personality of Jesus Christ:* neither therefore does the other expression disprove the personality of the Holy Spirit. For, supposing "the communion of the Holy Spirit" to mean a participation of *Divine influences,* these influences may still be the influences OF the Holy Spirit, just as being "*partakers of Christ*" signifies enjoying a participation, not of himself personally, but of the effects of his mediation.

NOTE C, page 99. (Properly F.)

It is quite enough for my present purpose, that "THE WORD" is ascertained to be, in this passage of John's gospel, *a Title given to Christ.* The questions as to the *origin* and *import* of the title have no immediate connexion with my argument. I may shortly observe, however, that, as there is no sufficient evidence of the evangelists having been acquainted with the writings either of Philo the Jew, or of Plato the Heathen philosopher; so there is no necessity for the supposition that this phraseology was borrowed from any such source. On the contrary: as the phrase "*the Word of Jehovah*" is ascertained to have been common amongst the Jewish people, and to have been used by their writers, when they quoted passages from the Old Testament Scriptures, in which the Name of *Jehovah* occurs, as an equivalent for that name: (Lardner's Hist. of Apostles and Evangelists, in Bishop Watson's Theol. Tracts, Vol. II. p. 166. Text and Note.) and as the Jews, consequently, were accustomed to speak of the *word of the Lord* under epithets of a *personal* nature, ascribing to it personal and even Divine characters:—the probability is, that, as not only Plato, but Zeno, and other Greek philosophers, had intercourse with the Jews, and borrowed from them various notions, which they mixed up, in a corrupted form, into a heterogeneous compound with their own philosophy;—the probability, I say, is, that this is the true origin of such phraseology, in the writings of Plato and of the Stoics.—Perhaps it is going to the opposite extreme from those who think the Evangelists borrowed from Plato, to interpret the phrase, *the word of Jehovah,* in various occurrences of it in the Old Testament Scriptures, as meaning the *second person of the Trinity.* The instances adduced in support of this idea are such as these—Gen. xv. 1, 4, 5, compared

with verses 7, 8, 9, 13. 1 Sam. iii. 7, 21. Psalm cvii. 20, &c. &c.—Parkhurst's Gr. Lex. on the word Λόγος, § 16.—I would not, at the same time, be understood as entirely rejecting this opinion. Different considerations, not destitute of plausibility, have been urged in support of it.

As to the reason why the appellation Λόγος is given to the second person of the Trinity (or rather, let me say for the present, given to Jesus Christ) it would be a misspending of the reader's time, to consider minutely the different translations which have been proposed, with the reasonings in support of each. I am satisfied, that our received translation is the most natural, and the best supported by parallel passages of Scripture—and that the most satisfactory reason which can be assigned for the application of the title *Word*, and *Word of God* to Christ, is his being *the medium of Divine communications to men.* God makes himself, his will, his purposes, known to us *by him*, as men do theirs to one another by *words* or *speech.* See Matth. xi. 27. and John i. 18.

NOTE E, page 106. (Properly H.)

Dr. Smith gives the following translation of the fifth and sixth verses, supporting it by appropriate critical annotations:—

"For a child is born to us:
A Son is given to us:
And the sovereignty is upon his shoulder:
And his Name is called Wonderful, Counsellor,
God the Mighty, Everlasting, Prince of Peace:
To the extent of [his] sovereignty and to [his] peace shall be no end,
Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom,
To fix it, and to establish it in judgment and in righteousness,
From henceforth and for ever."

And having given his brief comment showing it to refer to the Messiah, he subjoins:—"Is it then extravagant to affirm, that if there be any dependance on the clear meaning of words, the Messiah is here drawn in the opposite characters of humanity and Deity:—the nativity and frailty of a mortal child, and the incommunicable attributes of the Omnipotent and Eternal God?—Justly is his Name called WONDERFUL."—Script. Doctr. of the Messiah, Vol. I. pp. 284, 285.

When these Discourses were delivered, 1 Tim. iii. 16. was introduced in connexion with this text in Isaiah, and also Matth. i. 22. 23. as additional examples of the name God, in its highest sense, being given to Jesus Christ. On the former of these two passages, when the Discourses were preached, the following comments were offered:

"In this text, we have an instance of such criticism as I formerly alluded to; which could not be easily made intelligible to a mixed audience, as it

depends on the similarity between certain letters of the Greek alphabet, and on the mode of writing in ancient manuscripts.

"The rendering adopted in the 'Improved Version' is—"He who was manifested in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit," &c.

"On this I have only to remark,

"1*st*, That, on the ground of evidence *purely critical*, that is, apart from all considerations of connexion and sense, the utmost that can be alleged against the received translation is, that it is *doubtful*.

"2*dly*, From the nature of the case, the probability seems quite as great, of the corruption of the original reading from the received version to the other, as from the other to it. I think I might say with truth, considerably greater: since it is much easier to suppose the *omission* of certain marks and lines, in and over particular letters, in the course of transcribing, than it is to suppose the *insertion* of such marks where they originally had no place. I mention this, because the general principle appears an obvious one; and because the application of it to the case in question will be perceived by at least some of my present hearers.

"3*dly*, Connected with these remarks is the circumstance, that this text, as it here stands, is in perfect harmony with those already quoted, and others of a similiar description.

"4*thly*, Even the phrase 'He who was manifested in the flesh,' seems of itself strongly to convey the idea of previous existence. The designation is certainly a very singular one, when considered as used respecting a mere human prophet,—a descendant of Adam by ordinary generation:—'He who was manifested in the flesh.'—The expression, in such an application of it, is, I am confident, without a single parallel.

"5*thly*, If we take away the manifestation in the flesh from being a part, and even the leading part, of the mystery of godliness, it will not be easy to show wherein the greatness,—the peculiar and incontrovertible greatness, of this mystery, so emphatically affirmed by the apostle, really consists."

I was induced to omit this passage in the printed Discourse, not by a decided conviction that these remarks were destitute of force:—but because I was desirous of having it to say, that I had built no part of my argument on any passage which eminent critics had pronounced of doubtful authority.

Griesbach, in his second edition, gives the preference to ὅς, inserting it in the text, and throwing θεὸς into the margin.

The following Extract from the Eclectic Review, Vol. V. pages 246—248. Art. New Versions of the New Testament,—will at once show the various readings, with the authorities in support of each, and explain the allusion made in one of the above observations to the mode of writing in ancient Greek MSS.

"The second remarkable text, to which we have alluded, is 1 Tim. iii. 16. where the question is, whether we ought to read θεὸς, ὃς, or ὅ.

"1. θεὸς is the reading of almost all the Greek MSS. in small letters,

i. e. those whose antiquity does not reach higher than the xth century. *Versions:* the Slavonic and the Arabic of the Polyglott. *Fathers:* Chrysostom, Theodoret, John of Damascus, Œcumenius, and Theophylact: one or two others of the Greek fathers have been adduced, but liable to strong doubt.

"2. Ὅς is the reading of the Alexandrine,* the Ephrem, the Augiensis, and the Bœrnerianus. The Vatican, the Sangermanensis, and the Coislinianus, are mutilated at this place. These are all the existing Uncial MSS. of the Epistles of Paul, except the Passionei, which has not been sufficiently examined, and whose evidence, therefore, on this point, is not before the public. It is also found in the Parisinus 14, and the Upsaliensis, both small letter MSS. of the xith or xiith century. *Versions:* the Coptic of Sais reads ὃς. Both the Syriac, the Ethiopic, the Armenian, and the Arabic of Erpenius, have the pronominal prefix; so that it is impossible to be determined whether they read ὃς *who*, or ὅ *which*. *Fathers:* as far as can be ascertained, the *Greek* fathers (with the exception mentioned above) appear to have read ὃς or ὅ. Of the *Latins*, *qui* (ὃς) appears only in Jerome on Is. liii. 1. and the Acts of the II. Council of Constantinople.

"3. Ὅ is found in only one Greek MS. but that an Uncial one, the Clermont. *Versions:* the old Latin, and the Vulgate. *Fathers:* all the Latins, and some of the Greeks.

"On this statement it is to be observed; (1.) That Θεὸς is found only in the more recent Manuscripts, the offspring of the latest of the three ancient recensions, the Byzantine: and it is supported by no evidence from the Fathers earlier than the close of the ivth century, nor from the Versions earlier than the ixth. (2.) That the greatest weight of external evidence is in favour of ὃς. (3.) That ὅ is the more smooth and easy reading, and agrees with the immediate antecedent μυστήριον. It was, therefore, most

* "It is well known that it has been a matter of very anxious dispute, whether OC or $\overline{\Theta C}$ (the contraction in all the most ancient MSS. for Θεὸς) is the *original* reading of the Alexandrine. It is confessed, on all hands, that the two cross strokes which *now* appear in the MS. are the addition of a modern pen. The question is, Were they added without any authority in the MS. itself? Or, with the honest intention of preserving from irrecoverable loss a point and a cross-stroke, which had proceeded from the first hand, but were in a state of evanescence? All the aids of eyesight, sunshine, and microscopes, have been employed to discover the vestiges of the primeval point and cross-stroke: but no decisive result has been obtained. Some diligent inspectors thought they could perceive the faint remains: others, as diligent and eagle-eyed, protested that they could not discover any such traces: and even the same observer has at one time fancied he saw them, and at another time has been unable to recover the vision. See Wetstein, Berriman, Owen in Bowyer's Conj. and particularly Woide's valuable preface with the notes of Spohn. Our own opinion is, that the scale turns in favour of OC. The vellum at this passage is said to be now so much rubbed and worn by repeated examination, that no future inspection can be of much avail towards determining the point at issue."

probably substituted by some, who, not adverting to the remote antecedent, fancied the construction of ὅς ungrammatical. (4.) That if $\overline{\text{ΘC}}$ were the original reading, it is to the last degree difficult to conceive that it could have degenerated into OC, and that so important a word as $\overline{\text{ΘC}}$ should not have been made prominent by the Fathers of the first three centuries. But, to any one versed in the appearance of Uncial manuscripts, it will appear easy and probable that $\overline{\text{ΘC}}$ should have grown out of OC.

"The learned and unbiassed reader must form his own judgment: we confess that ours is in favour of ὅς. But we object strongly to the rendering in the Improved Version, "He who was manifested in the flesh was justified by the Spirit," &c. The editors have followed Abp. Newcome in supposing that ὅς may be put elliptically for οὗτος ὅς. This supposition, we apprehend, is quite unauthorized and erroneous. Ὅς is frequently put for οὗτος and αὐτός. It also not unusually supplies the place of the partitive ὅστις; but in that case, we think, it is always followed by a particle, as τε, γε, δή, ἄν, γάρ; as in the passages adduced in the Archbishop's not for sanctioning this construction, and which consequently are irrelevant. Till some better support is adduced for this assumed ellipsis, we must reject it as false Greek. In the place before us, ὅς is undoubtedly a relative; and its natural and proper antecedent has been pointed out by the learned Professor Cramer, distinguished thus:

— ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία ΘΕΟΥ ζῶντος (στῦλος καὶ ἑδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα, ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον) ὃς ἐφανερώθη κ. τ. λ.

—"Which is the church of the living God (the pillar and support of the truth, and confessedly great, is the mystery of godliness) who was manifested," &c.

The only observation I would make on the above extract, relates to the affirmation that the use of ὅς for οὗτος ὅς (he who) is quite unauthorized and erroneous. This is surely too unqualified. The Editors of the Improved Version refer to three passages. The first two, viz. Mark iv. 25. and Luke viii. 18. may be considered as one, being parallels; and in both of them, the ὅς is either, according to the Reviewer's remark, equivalent to ὅστις, or may be understood as having its antecedent expressed in αὐτῷ and αὐτοῦ which immediately follow; each branch of the sentence being susceptible of a transposed arrangement.—In the third passage, however, Rom. viii. 32. Ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο, &c. the ὅς, although accompanied with the particle γε, can hardly be interpreted as equivalent to the partitive ὅστις, for it is applied to *God*, who is necessarily *one:* yet no antecedent is *expressed*. —Observing that Mr. Nares refers to a writer on this subject, signing himself Primitivus, in the Monthly Theological Repository for May 1809, I have consulted the paper, and find the following passages adduced, in evidence of the same use of ὅς, in addition to Rom. viii. 32, which stands first. I shall simply refer to them, and leave the question to the determination of the reader:—Mark xiii. 37. Mark xiv. 8. John i. 45. iii. 34. iv.

18. Rom. vii. 15. viii. 24. xv. 21. (a strong passage) 1 Cor. x. 20. xv. 36. 2 Cor. xi. 17.—Mark ix. 40. compared with Luke xi. 23. Rom. ii. 21, 22, 23. 1 Cor. xi. 27. with 29.—1 John ii. 5. compared with 1 John iii. 21.—1 John iv. 6.

Thus far the note in the first edition of these Discourses.—For a learned critical discussion of the comparative value of the authorities, for and against the different readings of this passage, I would now refer the reader to Dr. Lawrence's "Remarks upon the systematical classification of Manuscripts, adopted by Griesbach, in his edition of the Greek Testament," lately published; pp. 71—83.—The passage is too long for insertion here. The discussion, however, terminates in favour, not of ὃς, (the reading preferred by the writer in the Eclectic Review,) but of the reading of the approved version, θεὸς.—My *first* observation on the text is thus thoroughly established, "that on the ground of evidence *purely critical*, the *utmost* that can be alleged against the received translation is, that it is *doubtful*."—The quotation from the Eclectic Review was not intended to convey my own judgment, as the reader would at once perceive from the difference between some of the views contained in it and those expressed in my remarks on the text;—but merely to show my reason for declining to use the passage in the controversy, viz. its having been questioned even by some Trinitarian critics.

My *second* remark on the text, it may have been observed, is in direct opposition to the judgment expressed by the Reviewer. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of confirming what I have said as to the greater probability of a change, in transcribing, from $\overline{\text{ΘC}}$ to OC, than from OC to ΘC, by the authority of a Biblical critic, so eminent as Dr. Lawrence. In a note on the passage, in the Tract just referred to, he says:

"To one point, however, I must be here permitted slightly to allude. "Griesbach supposes that OΣ was mistaken for $\overline{\text{ΘΣ}}$, because the transcriber "knew that the passage was usually interpreted of God, the Word." "Nimirum OΣ facile transiit in $\overline{\text{ΘΣ}}$, cum librarii non ignorarent, locum hunc "vulgo de θεῷ λογῳ intelligi. But surely transcribers by profession (and "such, before the invention of printing, were those who transcribed "Manuscripts) are never in the habit of reasoning on the sense of what "they copy. Ask a law stationer of the present day, after he has engrossed "the conveyance of an estate, with a long description of the title, whether "that title accrued by descent or purchase; and he will perhaps be puzzled "to answer the question. A transcriber, therefore, in the case under "consideration, having his attention rivetted to words, and not to things, "would be more likely, I apprehend, to commit an error by *omission* than "by *addition*; to *overlook* the horizontal lines which distinguish $\overline{\text{ΘΣ}}$ from OΣ, "than to *supply* them."

With respect to the true reading of this text in the Alexandrine Manuscript, the following observation, (from the same note of Dr. Lawrence,)

which is also opposite to the judgment of the Reviewer, may be gratifying to the reader:

" I cannot help adding another remark, with respect to the particular " reading of the Manuscript A. Mill states, that at first he suspected the " reading of θως assigned to it; but that afterwards he clearly distinguished " the ancient traces of the horizontal line, which formed the ϴ:"—" Verum " postea, perlustrato attentius loco, lineolæ, quæ primam aciem fugerant, " ductus quosdam ac vestigia *satis certa* deprehendi, præsertim ad partem " sinistram."—" Wetstein, however, conceives, that Mill deceived himself, " mistaking for the horizontal line of the theta, that which belongs to an " epsilon, in a word on the other side of the leaf. Prolegomena, p. 22. " But Woide maintains this to be impossible, because the line of the epsilon " in question is not precisely *at the back* of the theta, but *a little below it.* " Not. Cod. Alex. § 87. The veracity of Mill, (to omit the testimony of " others,) that he saw a line of this description, seems unimpeachable. " Can it be deemed remarkable, that it should have disappeared, after so " long a lapse of years, in a Manuscript perpetually examined in this " particular place, and injuriously treated, when it is considered, that " Griesbach admits the possibility of the evanescence even of whole letters, " in the Ephrem Manuscript, (sleeping quietly in the Royal Library at " Paris, without molestation,) between the short period of Wetstein's time " and his own? " Immo vocabula nonnulla, quæ ego legere haud potui, " assecutus erat ille, sive armatis oculis ea perlustraverat, quod equidem " haud feceram, sive literarum ductus ut credible est, inde a Wetstenii " tempore magis evanuerint." Symb. Crit. vol. I. p. 6.

Matth. i. 22, 23. was not only introduced when the Discourses were delivered, but was, till now, retained in the printed Volume.—It also is left out in the present Edition, for the reasons assigned in my Reply to Mr. Yates. I have there said—" It would be uncandid to question the justice " of Mr. Yates's observation relative to the singular manner in which " *proper names* were formed and applied by the ancient Hebrews;"—that " 'it was common among them to give to their children names, which were " 'in reality short sentences, expressive of some Divine favour, conferred " 'at the time of the child's birth.'—Of this he produces an instance or two; and others will occur to every mind familiar with the Old Testament " records.—On this ground, I frankly admit, that the mere circumstance of " the Messiah being called by this name, (Immanuel) would not of itself, " in absence of other evidence, be at all a conclusive proof of his Divine " dignity.—That it *does* imply his possessing this dignity, I entertain no " doubt;—but, taking it by itself, I should find difficulty in proving it. " From the peculiar circumstances in which the prophecy (in Isa. vii.) is " introduced, and the length of discussion to which a full consideration of " these would necessarily lead, I formerly declined any criticism on the

" passage; and I am disposed to follow the same course still.—I shall satisfy " myself with one observation only, the truth of which must be obvious to " every reader of the entire prophecy, from chap. vii. 1. to chap. ix. 7. that " the child named 'IMMANUEL' in chap. vii. 14. is the same with the " 'child born' and 'Son given,' whose name, in chapter ix. 6. is called— " 'THE MIGHTY GOD;' so that, if the latter appellation can be shown to " express his divinity, this alone should go far to settle the true meaning of " the former."

With these views of the value of the designation IMMANUEL as one of the ordinary proofs of our Lord's divinity, I was gratified to find so perfect a coincidence in the sentiments expressed by Dr. Smith. The following is the closing paragraph of his Comment on the prophecy in Isaiah, from which the quotation in the Evangelist Matthew is taken:—" 3. It is " admitted on all sides, that the declaration 'She shall call his name " 'Immanuel,' is expressive of a fact as a commemorative title.* It does " not appear to have been the proper name of any person: and certainly " it was not given to Jesus of Nazareth, as a name, either by his friends, or " by any others. The meaning, therefore, of such an expression must be " deduced from the circumstances of its application. In what I suppose to " have been the primary and inferior reference, it would express no more " than that, in the existing distresses of Judea and Jerusalem, GOD would be " WITH THEM as their Almighty Protector. In this acceptation it is most " clearly repeated in a following part of the context, which again affirms the " signal overthrow of the two invading powers. 'Form your counsels; and " 'they shall be defeated: issue your orders; and they shall not stand: " 'because GOD IS WITH us.'† But, by the same rule of interpretation, the " application of the expression to the Messiah must be governed, and the " sense which it yields be ascertained, by our previous knowledge concern- " ing the person, office, and circumstances of HIM who was to be the " Messiah. If, from other evidence, it shall have satisfactorily appeared, " that HE is a Divine person, then may this descriptive appellation be " understood as declaring, not only that the protection and favour of God " abide with his church in a distinguished manner under the administration " of the Messiah; but that, in the most full and literal sense, He who was " manifested in the flesh, and born of the Virgin, has a superior nature, " and is 'over all, GOD blessed for ever.'

" Of this point, however, the present passage, according to the view " here given of it, is only an accessory and corroborative proof, and cannot " be regarded as an independent evidence."—Script. Test. &c. Vol. I. pp. 271—273.

* Instances of this usage, or allusions to it, occur in Isa. lxii. 4. lv. 13. lxv. 15, 16. Ezek. xlviii. 35.

† Chap. viii. 10. Literally—" because Immanuel."

NOTE D, page 104. (Properly G.)

The celebrated Griesbach, whose text of the New Testament stands so deservedly high both with Unitarians and Trinitarians, pronounces the following judgment regarding the testimony to the divinity of Christ in the introductory verses of the Gospel by John:—"In primis locus ille Joh. i. 1, 2, 3. tam perspicuus est, atque omnibus exceptionibus major, ut neque interpretum neque criticorum audacibus conatibus unquam everti, atque veritatis defensoribus eripi possit."—"That passage in particular John i. 1—3. is so clear, and so much above all exception, that it never can be overthrown and wrested from the defenders of the truth by the daring attempts of either commentators or critics."

And in speaking of those texts which a conscientious adherence to his critical canons obliged him to exclude, or to alter, or to mark as doubtful, he gives the following general statement of what appeared to his own mind the amount of their value in the evidence of this great doctrine:—"Interim "uni tamen dogmati, eique palmario, doctrinæ scilicet de vera Jesu Christi "divinitate, nonnihil a me detractum esse videri posset nonnullis qui non "solum locum illum celebratissimum 1 John v. 7. e textu ejectum, verum "etiam lectionem vulgarem loci 1 Tim. iii. 16. (ut et Act. xx. 28.) dubita-"tioni subjectam et lectorum arbitrio permissam, invenient. Quare, ut "iniquas suspiciones omnes, quantum in me est, amoliar, et hominibus "malevolis calumniandi ansam præripiam, primum *publice profiteor atque* "*Deum testor*, neutiquam me de veritate istius dogmatis dubitare. Atque "sunt profecto *tam multa et luculenta argumenta et scripturæ loca*, quibus "vera deitas Christi vindicatur, ut ego quidem intelligere vix possem, "quomodo, concessa scripturæ sacræ divina auctoritate, et admissis justis "interpretandi regulis, dogma hoc in dubium a quoquam vocari possit,"* "Meantime it may appear to some persons that I have not a little impaired "the evidence of one doctrine, and one too of prime excellence, the doctrine "I mean of the proper divinity of Jesus Christ, when they find not only "the celebrated passage, 1 John v. 7. thrown out of the text, but also the "received reading of 1 Tim. iii. 16. (as well as of Acts xx. 28.) brought "into doubt, and left to the judgment of the reader. Wherefore, that as "far as possible, I may remove all unfair surmises, and deprive ill-disposed "men of every handle for calumny, I first of all publicly declare, and take "God to witness, that I entertain no doubt whatever respecting the truth "of that doctrine. And indeed the arguments and passages of Scripture "by which the proper deity of Christ is established, are so numerous and so "clear, that I am truly at a loss to conceive, how any person, granting the "Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and adopting just rules of "interpretation, can call this doctrine into question."

* Quoted in Laurence's Remarks on Griesbach's Systematical Classification of Manuscripts, pp. 3, 4.

NOTE P, page 109. (Properly I.)

On this text the reader may be referred to Middleton on the Greek Article, pp. 455—464.—Nares' Remarks on the Improved Version of the New Testament, pp. 163—172. The following is the Note of the learned Reviewer of the Improved Version, in the Eclectic Review, Vol. V. pp. 331, 332.

"Rom. ix. 5. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, by natural descent, Christ *came*. God who is over all be blessed for ever." Thus, by putting a full point after σάρκα, and regarding the remaining words as a devout apostrophe, the editors of the I. V. follow Enjedin and other Socinians, in order to silence this signal testimony to the Deity of the Messiah. Locke proposed to insert the full stop after πάντων. But to both these expedients there lies the solid objection, that *they violate the usage of Greek construction;* and in a point of idiom, too, so interwoven with the texture of the language, in all its forms and dialects, as to have been preserved unaltered, notwithstanding the Hebraisms and other deviations from classic purity which characterize the New Testament. See this fact satisfactorily proved in Dr. Middleton on the Greek Article, pp. 458—460.

"Feeling, it may be, some want of confidence in the former resource, Whitby, Taylor, Wakefield, and the present editors, have expressed a strong inclination to the conjecture of Jonas Schlictingius, that, instead of ὁ ὤν, we should read ὤν ὁ, as the last step of the climax. But who does not perceive that the conjectural criticism of an interested party, in his own cause, and in defiance of positive evidence, is little better than subornation of testimony in a court of law?—The conjecture is also inadmissible on three other grounds. First, it would convey a sense contrary to the apostle's direct assertion and avowed argument in a preceding part of this epistle; see ch. iii. 29. Secondly, it would be false Greek. (See both these arguments in Dr. Middleton, p. 456.) Lastly, the conjecture is in itself exceedingly violent and improbable; for the *spiritus asper* was not so fallen into neglect in the time of St. Paul as that we can safely assume its omission; and if we admit that ὤν, ὁ was the original reading, it would have been so different in appearance from the pretended corruption, that we can scarcely conceive that no vestiges of such a reading should remain, at least in the most ancient versions. The comparison would have stood thus:

"Existing Text, ΑΡΚΑΩΝΕΠΙ.

"Conjecture, CΑΡΚΑΗΩΝΟΕΠΙ.

"Our serious conviction is, that the received reading is confirmed, *invictissimis argumentis*, to be the true one; and that an impartial man who understood Greek, but knew nothing of our polemical theology, would inevitably translate the passage in the common manner; "of whom is the Christ, with regard to his human nature, who is over all, God blessed for ever."

In addition to the considerations stated in this extract, against the

conjectural alteration of ὁ ὤν into ὢν ὁ.—there is another, which I do not find adverted to by any of the writers above referred to, but which appears to me very decisive. [I have since observed that Dr. Smith, in a Note, Vol. II. p. 688 refers to Venema in his Controversy with S. Crellius, for the the same observation.] It arises from the situation of the conjunction καὶ, in the fifth verse, where the disputed words lie. In it and the verse preceding there is evidently an enumeration of articles, which constituted peculiar honour of the Israelitish people. Οἵτινές εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται, ὧν ἡ υἱοθεσία, καὶ ἡ δόξα, καὶ αἱ διαθῆκαι, καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία, καὶ ἡ λατρεία, καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι· Ὧν οἱ πατέρες ΚΑΙ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν. Nothing can be more evident, than that the καὶ here brings us to the *closing particular in the enumeration*, the *last article in the series*. Were the conjectural reading the true one, the fifth verse must have stood thus—ὧν οἱ πατέρες, ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς, τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ΚΑΙ ὢν ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς, &c.—It has been alleged, that the conjecture is supported by its giving *completeness to the climax*. But, besides that God's being their God is implied in what goes before, can there be a finer finishing to the climax than the descent from Israel of the DIVINE Saviour of the world? The mention of the SUPREME GODHEAD of the Christ makes an immense addition to the peculiar honour which was put upon that people in his taking the human nature from the stock of Abraham.

I have called the translating of the phrase το κατα σαρκα *by natural descent* an arbitrary freedom.—The effect of the prepositive article in such phrases is sufficiently well known to the Greek scholar:—"το κατα σαρκα. Act. Apost. ii. 30. Quantum ad carnem attinet." Vigerus.—"Interdum το absolute ponitur, et vertendum est *quantum ad, ad illud quod attinet, nempe*. Rom. ix. 5. το κατα σαρκα, nempe quoad humanam ejus naturam.' Schleusner.—"Rom. ix. 5. το κατα σαρκα, for κατα το κατα σαρκα χρημα, *in respect of the flesh*." —Parkhurst.

The reasoning, then, from the antithetical form of the sentence, stands in all its force.—Acts ii. 30. referred to by Schleusner, furnishes a strong confirmation of it:—"Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God "had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins *according to* "*the flesh* (το κατα σαρκα) he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne." What is the meaning of the phrase here? If Jesus possessed no other nature than the ordinary nature of a man, was it not enough to say that he was to be of the fruit of David's loins? How could he spring from the loins of David otherwise than after the flesh? Why, then, the *qualifying* clause—*in respect of the flesh*? unless it was intended to exclude a higher nature, which entered into the constitution of his person, but according to which he was *not* descended of David—not his SON, but his LORD.

"Wherever that phrase '*according to the flesh*' occurs, it implies some "other aspect under which the thing or person may be contemplated. "Paul had *other brethren* besides those who were sprung by natural descent "from Abraham (Rom. ix. 3.);—there was *another Israel*, besides that dis- "tinguished by the name on account of fleshly birth (1 Cor. x. 18.);—

" Christ might be viewed in *another* aspect than according to his descent " from David (Acts ii. 30.);—and finally, there were *other masters* than " masters according to the flesh (Eph. iv. 5.); else this form of expression " could not, in the passages referred to, with propriety have been used."*

The words ὁ ων naturally join with the immediately preceding name χριστος. They are equivalent to ὁς εστιν. " Illud ὁ ων ad neminem nisi ad Christum potest referri. Id docet ipsa loquendi forma: ea enim permutatur cum altera ὁς εστι. Ita Rom. i. 25, dicitur του κτισαντα ὁς εστιν ευλογητος εις τους αιωνας: sed 2 Cor. xi. 31. ὁ θεος—ὁ ων ευλογητος εις τους αιωνας: et usurpatur, quum plura de eo dicuntur de quo sermo erat; ita John i. 18. ὁ μονογενης υἱος ὁ ων εις τον κολπον του πατρος, et Joh. iii. 13. ὁ υἱος του ανθρωπου ὁ ων εν τω ουρανω, adeoque ea de re dubitari plane nequit; eo minus, quoniam illud antegressum το κατα σαρκα Christum certa quadam in ratione collocat, et manifesto docet, eum alio etiam intuitu considerari posse." Royaards, Diatribe, &c. p. 138.—For other instances of the same construction, see John i. 18, 12, 17. Rev. v. 5.

It has often been remarked, that, in cases of ascriptions of praise, such as Unitarians suppose the words in Rom. ix. 5. to contain, it is the uniform practice of the Scripture writers to place the word for " Blessed" first in order.—To this practice one solitary exception has been produced. It is the Septuagint Greek of Psal. lxviii. 19. The exception, however, is only apparent. The 18th and 19th verses together stand thus:—ver. 18. Ἀναβας εἰς ὑψος, ἠχμαλωτευσας αἰχμαλωσιαν ἐλαβες δοματα ἐν ἀνθρωπῳ, και γαρ ἀπειθουντες του κατασκηνωσαι. 19. Κυριος ὁ Θεος ἐυλογητος, ἐυλογητος κυριος ἡμεραν καθ' ἡμεραν, κ. τ. λ. —Without attempting a translation of these words, which it would not be very easy to give, I request the attention of the English reader to the verses as they stand in his own Bible:—" 18. Thou hast ascended on " high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, yea " for the rebellious also, that THE LORD GOD might dwell among them. 19. " Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with his benefits, &c."—In the original Hebrew, the words יה אלהים corresponding to ΚΥΡΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΟΣ in the beginning of ver. 19. in the LXX., are the concluding words of verse 18. and are rendered in the established version accordingly, " that THE LORD " GOD might dwell among them." In the LXX. these words have been transferred, at the expense of sense and syntax, from the end of the 18th to the beginning of the 19th verse; and this has given rise to the insulated and anomalous phrase ΚΥΡΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΕΥΛΟΓΗΤΟΣ, in the beginning of the latter. There seems good reason, therefore, for thinking, that this is only

* " Ubicunque enim locutio illa κατα σαρκα reperitur, indicatur simul alia rei aut personæ facies, quæ considerari potest. Paulus alios habuerit ἀδελφους quam hos Abrahamo orundos; alius sit Israelis populus quam is tantummodo qui propter natales hoc nomine insignitur; alio intuitu possit considerari Christus, quam quatenus natales ejus ex Davide repetuntur; alii denique sint κυριοι quam κατα σαρκα, necesse est, si l. c. l." (Rom. ix. 3. 1 Cor. x. 18. Acts ii. 30.) " et Eph. vi. 5. ea loquendi forma usurpari potest." Hermanni Royaards, Diatr. de divinitate Jesu Christi vera. P. 139.

an instance (and it does not stand alone) of confusion and anomaly in the Septuagint version, and that the *proper* doxology *begins with the second* εὐλογητος in verse 19.—Εὐλογητος ὁ Κυριος κ. τ. λ; which brings this case into agreement with the established practice of the language, and, in so far as the phraseology of the Scriptures is concerned, renders that practice *invariable*.

If this explanation of the seeming anomaly in the Septuagint be questioned—(yet I can see no reason why it should)—then, on the principle of otherwise uniform practice, supposing the reading to be correct, Dr. Smith will be justified in saying "the first clause (κυριος ὁ θεος εὐλογητος) must be rendered in the declarative form, "The Lord God is blessed."

NOTE F, (Properly K.) page 114.

On the texts here referred to, and others of a similar description, see Middleton on the Greek Article, pp. 525—533, 568—572, 621—626. —Granville Sharp on the Greek Article, pp. 20—24, 50—53.—Nares' Remarks on the Improved Version, pp. 224—230, and the Eclectic Review, vol. iv. pp. 771, 772; and vol. v. p. 336.

Mr. Sharp gives the following translations of 2 Pet. i. 1. from old English editions of the Bible:—"In the righteousness that cometh of *oure God and Saviour*, Jesu Christ." (Fol. Edit. 1549.) "Through the righteousness of *our God and Saviour*, Jesus Christ." (12mo. Edit. 1595.) "By the righteousness of *our God and Saviour*, Jesus Christ." (4to. Edit. 1599.) "The righteousness of Jesus Christ, *our God and Saviour*." (Margin of the Fol. Edit. 1611.") Sharpe on the Greek Article, p. 21, 22. "The Reverend Mr. Crutwell has remarked (in his useful edition of the English Bible with Bishop Wilson's Notes) that the words rendered in our present version, viz. "*of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*," were rendered "*of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*" in the versions of Wickliffe, Coverdale, Matthews, Cranmer, in the Bishop's (Bible,) (the) Geneva, (the) Rhemish (Bible) and by Doddridge, Wesley, Scattergood, and Purver; which is altogether a noble testimony of both ancient and modern times against the Socinian impiety." Ibid. p. 53.

"To the above-mentioned English translators may be added the name of *Tindal*, the author of the first printed English version of the N. T., who has given the very same rendering."—Middleton on the Gr. Art. p. 625.

Of this principle respecting the use of the Article, it is, no doubt, very possible to make erroneous and overstrained applications. In the two passages, however, introduced in the text, as well as in several others, the effect of it is clear and decisive:—and nothing can well be conceived more shamefully disingenuous than the following expressions of Mr. Belsham on this subject:—"Indeed, it is an indignity to the human understanding to maintain, that a doctrine which, if true, would shine conspicuously in every page of the N. T. should depend for its evidence on the critical use of the Greek Article, by the plain and unlettered writers of the N. T.; together with what would be equally necessary, the immaculate correctness of

transcribers. If this is the state to which the controversy is reduced, it would be better to give up the point at once. A doctrine of such magnitude as the proper deity of Christ, must have clearer and more substantial evidence, or none at all." Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 230. Note.—" The controversy *reduced to this!*" No, No. Mr. B. knew full well how far this was from being the fact. Such language is a mere *ruse de guerre*, to diminish, in the minds of the ignorant, the real extent of the enemy's force. On reading this note of Mr. B. one would be apt to think that his adversaries had been driven from post to post, stormed triumphantly out of every successive fortress,—till they had, at length, baffled and dispirited, taken their last shelter behind this feeble bastion of the Greek Article.—While the matter of fact is, that these adversaries retain the firm possession of a whole line of impregnable stations, against which "no weapon that has yet been formed has prospered." These adversaries have also shown, that, without the slightest apprehension of the stability of their cause, they can retire from disputed ground, when they are sensible that it cannot be retained with honour, or even when they perceive that the validity of their right of possession is, in any degree, questionable:—they do not feel themselves at all dependent on the retention of such ground, for their strength, and for their triumph.—They do most cordially agree with Mr. Belsham, when he says elsewhere, "that profound learning, and acute metaphysical "subtlety, are by no means necessary to settle the important question "concerning the person of Christ. The inquiry is into a plain matter of "fact, which is to be determined, like any other fact, by its specific evidence, "the evidence of plain unequivocal testimony; for judging of which no "other qualifications are requisite than a sound understanding, and an "honest mind." Belsham's Calm Inquiry, Introd. p. 5.

NOTE L, page 121.

I CANNOT refuse myself the pleasure of laying before my readers Dr. Smith's able, temperate, and candid critical elucidation of this text, in his "Scripture Testimony to the Messiah." Book II. chap. iv. Sect. 25.

"*Jehovah our Righteousness.*"

Jerem. xxiii. 5, 6.

1. Behold! the days are coming, saith Jehovah,
When I will raise unto David a righteous progeny;
And he shall reign sovereign and shall act wisely,
And he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land:

5. In his days Judah shall be saved,
And Israel shall rest in security;
And this is his name, which they shall call him,
JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

A passage parallel, or nearly so: ch. xxxiii. 15, 16.

1. In those days, and in that time,
I will raise unto David a righteous progeny,
And he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land:
In those days Judah shall be saved,
5. And Jerusalem shall rest in security:
And this is he who shall call to her,
JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"The connexion and manifest scope of these two passages point their reference to the Messiah: and in this reference they have been understood by the general consent of Jewish* and Christian interpreters. Unless it be denied that such a reference is the intention of the passages, it will remain that the Messiah is explicitly called by the incommunicable name of the self-existent One,—JEHOVAH. To avoid this conclusion, different methods are resorted to.

"Abrabenel† maintains that the title in question is the nominative of the verb, so that the sentence should be construed;—'And this [*viz.* righteous 'branch] is his name, which Jehovah our righteousness shall call him.' Grotius adopts this interpretation.‡

"Faustus Socinus makes, not the Messiah, but Israel or Judah to be the object to which the name is given, in the first instance; and Jerusalem, in the second.

"The Rabbis Kimchi, Salomon, and Moses Gerundensis, adopt a solution in which they are followed by the generality of Arian and Socinian commentators: that the title is indeed given to the Messiah, but not as a personal appellative. These writers understand it as a *descriptive* name, declaring the blessings which Jehovah would confer under the reign and by the instrumentality of the Messiah. Of such descriptive names examples are frequent: an altar was called by Jacob, El-Elohe-Israel, *God, the God of Israel;* another by Moses, Jehovah-nissi, *Jehovah my banner;* and the name of the predicted city in Ezekiel is Jehovah-shammah, *Jehovah is there.* Gen. xxxiii. 20. Ex. xvii. 15. Ezek. xlviii. 35.

"To the first and second of these opinions, it may be justly replied that they are unnatural constructions, contrived and forced upon the words for the mere purpose of evasion.

"But the third is entitled to more respectful consideration. The fact is unquestionable that the gratitude or hope of individuals, in the ancient scriptural times, was often expressed by the imposition of significant

* See very ample collections of these authorities in Dassovii Diss. Rabbin. Philol. and Frischmuthi Diss. de Nom. Mess. (in the Sylloge Dissertationum Eleg. vol. i. Amst. 1701.)

† Comm. in Proph. quæst. 4. ap. Frischm. c. I. § 23.

‡ Annot. in loc. § Resp. ad Vujek, c. vi. § 2.

appellations on persons or other objects, in the composition of which divine names and titles were frequently employed: these are, therefore, nothing but short sentences declarative of some blessing possessed or expected. When such names were given, the nature of the subject indubitably suggested the sense intended. It was impossible for a structure of earth or stones, or a merely human being, ever to be mistaken for the Deity; though the one might be honoured with the epithet, equivalent to the inscriptions of later times, JEHOVAH IS MY BANNER; or the other, as in the instance of Elijah, with the distinguished title, JAH (the abbreviation of JEHOVAH) IS MY GOD. Such names could never be regarded as any other than the memorials of piety, *because the* KNOWN *nature of the subject* precludes misapprehension.

"If, then, the person of the Messiah were indubitably ascertained to be only human, this appellation would be merely a descriptive proposition, and would be properly read with the supplement of the substantive verb, JEHOVAH *is our righteousness*: but, if, from other evidence, it were satisfactorily determined that the person of the Messiah includes a divine subsistence, the title would be applicable in its direct and strict signification, as a clear description of his person and of his official grace,—JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"So should we argue if the two suppositions were in equipoise to each other. But they are not so. Independently of all the evidence which we possess of a divine nature in the person of the Messiah, and which, being admitted on its own grounds, receives a corroboration from the passage before us; there is a consideration which especially belongs to the very phrase of this passage. What is 'righteousness,' in the scriptural sense? Is it not a standing clear and unimpeached, in relation to a given standard of rectitude? As applied to an accountable subject of God's moral government, does it not import that state of freedom from just accusation, and compliance with just requirements, upon which the Righteous Judge can look with entire satisfaction? Now this RIGHTEOUSNESS is the capital blessing of the gospel; and the mode of obtaining it is the great distinction, the unique glory of the Christian covenant. Hence Archbishop Newcome, and following him the Improved Version, generally renders that word, in the doctrinal parts of the New Testament, by the terms *justification* and *method of justification*. THUS *righteousness*, this justification, is constantly and most definitely attributed to Jesus Christ. Every other righteousness is disowned and rejected in comparison of HIS. Phil. iii. 8, 9. 'He is the end (scope, object, or design) of the law, for righteousness.' Rom. x. 4. In the most emphatic sense, HE is the RIGHTEOUSNESS of his people. 1 Cor. i. 30.

"Here, then, in the harmony and unison of revelation, in the correspondence between the prophecies which foretold the gospel and the doctrines which were its completion, we find a fact of weight enough to turn the scale, and determine the reference to the *Person* of the Divine Messiah,

that 'this is his name which they shall call him, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

"A general remark, connected with this particular instance, is worthy of observation. The most exalted method, within the compass of language, of attributing to any being the perfect possession of qualities or exercise of powers, is by employing the *abstract* terms of such qualities or powers, instead of the concrete. Thus, instead of saying that the Supreme Being is intelligent, benignant, and actively kind, the sublime simplicity of scripture says, God is LIGHT; God is LOVE; God is GOODNESS. 1 Joh. i. 5. iv. 16. Ps. cxliv. 2. But in this last passage, the word should perhaps be rendered, *my Benefactor*. Now, the observable fact to which we have adverted is, that this style of expression is more frequently and copiously used in application to the Saviour of mankind, than in reference to any other manifestation of God. Christ is our Light, Life, Hope, Truth, Peace, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Joh. i. 9. xiv. 6. 1 Tim. i. 1. Col. i. 27. Eph. ii. 14. 1 Cor. i. 30. This is one of those circumstances in the *manner* and *spirit* of the inspired writers which cannot fail to arrest the notice of an attentive mind, a sound judgment, and an unprejudiced heart; and the careful observance of which, in their very numerous and diversified forms, combine in producing a general effect which appears to me perfectly irreconcileable with any scheme that denies the proper Deity of Christ. These sacred writers seem never to have felt the need of cautions or restrictions, when they were pouring out the fulness of their minds in *the most unmeasured greatness* of expression, on the glory of their Redeemer."

NOTES " xxiii. L. 7. יקראו *he shall call him*, or rather *he shall announce*, or *proclaim, him:* understanding, with the Rabbis Kimchi and Ben Melech, for the nominative case, *Israel* or *the church*. Or it may be the third person plural, *they shall call*, put indefinitively (as *ferunt*, λέγουσι, &c. occurring also in the Biblical idiom, as in Deut. xxix. 24. Luke xvi. 9.) which is the opinion of Abrabenel and the elder Buxtorf, and the word is so pointed in Bomberg's Bible, Venice, 1525. Professor Eichhorn considers it as a sort of impersonal, like the German, *man hat genennet*, or the French *on dit*.

"The difference in xxxiii. L. 6. is observable. The clause as there given, may be read in three different ways:

"1. That adopted above, which is the closest, and is sanctioned by Rabbi Alscheth, Vatablus, Sebastian Schmidt, C. B. Michaelis (the father of the late John David M.) and Dathé. It is thus rendered in the Jewish, Spanish Version (Fernandez, Amst. 5486), in Cassiodore del Reyna's, and in the Dutch.

"2. Understanding שמו after זה, by deriving it from the parallel passage; and so reading 'and this is his name which he [or indefinitely as above] shall proclaim to her.'

"3. 'This is the name with which she shall be called:' Our common

version, the Geneva French, and Diodati's Italian. But, though the construction with ל is consistent with this sense, the insertion of the noun, supposed to be understood with זה can be derived only from ch. xxiii. and therefore would be שמו *his name*, not שמה *her name*. So that this reading seems to be untenable.

"But it is more than probable that the original words have sustained some alteration, and that the true reading is as found by Kennicott in several MSS. and by de Rossi in one, exactly the same as in the preceding passage, ch. xxiii. 6. This is supported by the Syriac, the best of all the ancient versions.

"xxiii. 5, 6. 'Behold! the days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will raise up to David the Messiah of the righteous, and he shall reign sovereign and shall be prosperous, and he shall execute the judgment of truth and righteousness in the land. In his days, they of the house of Judah shall be delivered, and Israel shall dwell in safe confidence; and this is his name by which he [Israel, or indefinitely,] shall call to him. Righteousnesses shall for us be performed, from the presence of the Lord, in his days.' xxxiii. 15, 16. 'In those days and in that time, I will raise up to David the Messiah of righteousness; and he shall execute the judgment of truth and righteousness in the land. In those days they of the house of Judah shall be delivered, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safe confidence; and this is her name by which he shall call to her, Righteousnesses—' &c. *Targum of Jonathan.*

"The Septuagint is greatly corrupted in both places. The latter clause of xxiii. 6. is thus:—'And this, his name which the Lord will call him, Josedek:' a manifest error from *Jehovah tzidkenu*, first contracted and then taken for a name. The addition, 'ιν τοις προφηταις, is palpably an interpolation. —In ch. xxxiii. the whole portion v. 14—26, is wanting in the Aldine, Vatican, and Alexandrine copies. It occurs, however, in three manuscripts, collated for Walton's Polyglott and Grabe's LXX. in which the latter clause of v. 16. stands thus:—

"Καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα ὃ κληθήσεται, Κύριος δικαιοσύνη ἡμῶν. 'And this the name which shall be announced, the Lord our righteousness.'

"Καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα ὃ καλέσει αὐτὴν, Κύριος δίκαιος σὺν ἡμῖν. 'And this the name which he shall call her, The righteous Lord with us.'"

NOTE M, page 151.

I shall, in this note, submit to the reader a few remarks on the two verses immediately subsequent to those which are discussed in the text.

John i. 4, 5. "*In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*"

The language of the fourth verse—"*In him was life; and the life was the light of men,*" has been variously understood by interpreters. Whitby makes the "*life*" to mean, "that life eternal which he revealed to the "world, 2 Tim. i. 10.; to which he taught the way, chap. xiv. 6.; which he

" promised to believers, chap. x. 28.; which he purchased for them, chap. " vi. 51, 53, 54.; which he is appointed to give them, chap. xvii. 2.; and to " which he will raise them up, chap. v. 29.: as having life in himself, ver. " 26." This interpretation appears to lead him immediately into the inconsistency of making this life the revealer of itself. " Hence it follows," says he, after further illustrating the above interpretation, " that this life " must be the light of men, by giving them the knowledge of this life, and of " the way leading to it," &c.; which, with all deference to a critic so deservedly eminent, seems to amount just to this—that the " light of men" is so called, because it reveals this "life," and yet this "life" is the " light of men."—" The life which the Evangelist here speaks of," says Dr. Macknight, " is the human life;" for he adds, " *and the life was the light* " *of men.* The human life that was in the *Word* was the light of men: " the Word, by becoming flesh, enlightened men in the knowledge of God. " Hence Jesus called himself *the light of the world,* (John viii. 12.) his " doctrine being to the understanding what light is to the eye." The principal objections to this view are, that it produces too sudden a transition from the Word as "in the beginning with God," and as the divine creator of all things, to the Word made flesh: and that it does what seems to be by no means necessary, restricts the meaning of his being the light of men, to the period of his manifestation in the human nature.—Doddridge, following some of the ancient fathers, takes from the end of the preceding verse the two last words, in the Greek (ὃ γέγονεν), and connects them with verse 4th. " *That which was in him was life; and the life was the light of men,*" which he thus paraphrases: " *That* fulness of power, wisdom, and " benignity, *which was in him, was* the fountain of *life* to the whole creation: " *and* it is in particular, our concern to remember, that *the life* which *was* " in him was *the light of men,* as all the light of reason and revelation was " the effect of his energy on the mind." The alteration in the construction is not, however, insisted upon; and, indeed, the very language of the paraphrase, shows it to be unnecessary: for after changing the expression " *in him was life*" into " *that which was in him was life,*" the learned critic goes on in his paraphrase as if he had kept the former: " *the life which was in him* was the light of men."—Interpretations, different in some respects from all of these, are given by others.

Without dwelling upon these; I would remark, that the language in question applies by far most naturally to THE WORD, *prior to his incarnation,* or at least not in a sense confined to the period of his incarnation. The Evangelist does not seem, at the third verse, to have finished what he had to say respecting the Word in the state in which he existed previously to his being "made flesh." After representing him as *God,* and as *with God,* and as the *Almighty Creator,* without whose power *not one creature* was formed; he adds, in verse 4th, an expression which may, with great propriety, be understood as affirming him to be the *self-existent* Jehovah, who *has life in himself,* and is the great fountain of life to all other

beings; so that there is no life in the universe that is not derived from him. We know how often Jehovah is distinguished in Scripture by the appellation of "*the living God;*" we know that this very name, by which he made himself known of old, the name JEHOVAH, is derived from his self-existence, and that it is, therefore, peculiarly his own, in distinction from all Idols, and pretenders to deity. When it is here, then, said of THE WORD, "*in him was life,*" the expression may be considered as equivalent to "*the living one;*" an appellation by which he denominated himself to John, the writer of this gospel history, when he made his glorious appearance to him in the Isle of Patmos—"Fear not; I am the first and the last, and (or even) THE LIVING ONE: and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore," &c. Rev. i. 17, 18. The Greek words are, Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος, καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, καὶ ὁ ζῶν· καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρὸς, &c.

It is a great help to the right understanding of any passage, to compare it with the language of the same writer, on the same subject, in other places. There is a remarkable correspondence between the expressions now before us, and those in 1 John i. 1, 2.—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of THE WORD OF LIFE (*for* THE LIFE *was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal* LIFE, *which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,*" &c.)

Jesus Christ is here denominated, in the end of the first verse, "*the Word of Life:*"—a sudden transition is then made to another, and shorter appellation, in the beginning of verse 2d; "*the Life* was manifested:"—and of this Life, this Eternal Life, it is affirmed, that it was "*with the Father,*" before it was manifested to us. Now, between this phraseology, and that before us, there is a striking coincidence. The last of the above expressions —"that Eternal Life *which was with the Father,*" answers to what is here said of the Word, that he (or it) "was in the beginning *with God:*"—"the *Word of Life,*" or *the living Word,* is equivalent in meaning to the phrase, "*in him (or in it) was life;*"—and in both cases there appears to be the same kind of sudden transition; the life which had been represented as belonging to the Word, being immediately converted into an appellation for the Word himself. In the one case we have,—"*That which we have heard and seen,* &c. *of* THE WORD OF LIFE; *(for* THE LIFE *was manifested,*" &c.:) —in the other,—"IN THE WORD WAS LIFE; *and* THE LIFE *was the light of men.*"—As in the former case, then, THE LIFE spoken of in the second verse, as manifested to men, is the same as THE WORD OF LIFE, or *the living Word,* in verse 1st; so, in the latter case, "THE LIFE *which was the light of men,*" is the same as "THE WORD, *in whom was life.*"

"*The life was the light of men.*" Light, here, refers particularly to *knowledge;*—and we might justly consider it as comprehending every species of knowledge, there being no kind of it which has not proceeded from the ETERNAL WORD. It seems here, however, to mean, especially, the know-

ledge of *Divine truth:* and the sentiment expressed is, that he who is "THE LIFE" has all along been, in this respect particularly, "*the light of men.*" He is called so, in a sense similar to that in which he is denominated "the Word of God:" as being the immediate author of divine communications to men;—imparting to them the light of saving truth. He has had from the beginning the management of the whole scheme of redemption, in all the stages of its progressive development; and has thus been the great dispenser of spiritual light to men. The apostle Peter speaks of the Old Testament prophets, as having delivered their predictions under the inspiration of "*the Spirit of Christ:*"—and from this the inference appears to be fair and natural, that if *prophetic light* came from him, *all* the light of truth, in whatever way communicated, proceeded from him also. I would not, by any means, be understood as *excluding* from the Evangelist's meaning, the period of his appearance on earth; because *then* he became "the light of men," in a more remarkable manner, and in a much higher degree, than ever before:—but I cannot, on the other hand, *confine* the meaning to this period; seeing there has never been a time, at which the designation of "the light of men" has not been justly applicable to the LIVING WORD.

Upon the same principle, I consider the fifth verse as expressing what has always been true; and not as referring exclusively to the reception which Jesus, "the light of the world," met with when he sojourned here below. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

"*It shineth in darkness.*" The darkness here, I imagine, is not the darkness of one dispensation, or state of things, compared with another; but more generally, the darkness of human ignorance and depravity. In this darkness, the light has always shone. The light imparted to the Jews shone, indeed, amidst the surrounding darkness of heathenism; but it shone also amidst the darkness of the Jews themselves; for they were by nature *darkness*—ignorant, depraved, and miserable—as well as the Gentiles. And the light "shineth in darkness" still; and must continue to shine in darkness, while it shines in this fallen and degenerate world.

It has likewise been always true that "the darkness *admitted* it not." So the phrase is rendered by Dr. Campbell, consistently, I should think, with its true meaning, in its present connexion. I see no good reason for confining this to the reception given to Christ when on earth; although that was, certainly, a most affecting instance and illustration of the general fact. The words are equally true of the aversion of mankind in general to the light of truth, *before* his coming, *during* his residence on earth, and *since* his exaltation to the right hand of God.—"The light *shineth*," (*present time*, φαίνει) it *continues* to shine, "in darkness;"—"and the darkness admitted it not;" (*aorist*, or indefinite time past, οὐ κατέλαβεν) it *has not, at any time, admitted it.*—It has always been, and still is, true, of mankind in general, that they have "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds have been evil." O that all were impressed with the conviction, that if they

persist in shutting their eyes against the light of life, and in choosing the darkness of error and sin, it will, in the end, be to their everlasting condemnation!

NOTE N, page 155.

The passages quoted from Isaiah do certainly convey the idea that the "heavens were stretched out" and the "earth spread abroad," by the direct and immediate agency of Jehovah, to the exclusion of inferior instrumentality. It has been admitted by one Unitarian writer at least, (Yates's Vind. of Unit. p. 87.), that if such language were used respecting Christ, that he "stretched out the heavens alone, and made the world by "himself," it would amount to a proof of his proper divinity.—But the proof is equally sound and conclusive from the language as it stands. It clearly implies, when used by JEHOVAH, that *no other besides himself* was employed in the work of creation. If Jesus Christ, then, be *not* Jehovah, does not the language express what is *not true*?—Indeed we might leave this conclusion to be deduced by the reader, from the intrinsic absurdity involved in the conception of *creation* by *created instrumentality*. If the reader will attempt to analyze the conception, he will very soon find that the word *instrumentality*, in such a connexion, has no meaning. There *is* and *can be* no such thing. If there be any thing more distinctly and exclusively than another the direct work of omnipotence, it is *creation out of nothing*. What is there that can mark and distinguish Godhead, if this does not? The power to create, must, according to every conception which our minds are capable of forming, be incommunicable. We can just as well conceive that a creature should *become God*, as that a creature should *create*. "Why might not the power of *self-subsistence*," says Dr. Priestley, "be imparted to another, as well as that of *creating out of* "*nothing*?"—"He must have lost his reason," says Allix, "who imagines "that God can make a creature capable of creating the universe. Grant "this, and by what character will you distinguish the creature from the "Creator? By what right, then, could God appropriate, as he doth very "often in the Old Testament, the work of the world's creation to himself, "excluding any other from having to do in it but himself? Why should "God, upon this score, forbid the giving worship to the creature, which is "due to the Creator? The Arians, who worship Jesus Christ, though "they esteem him a creature, and the Papists who swallow whole the "doctrine of transubstantiation; they may teach in their schools that a "creature may be enabled by God to become a creator! But for us, who "deny that any thing but God is to be adored, we reject all such vain "conceits, of a creature being any way capable to receive the infinite "power of a creator."

If any being, then, is in the scriptures represented as *creating*, that being must be God. I do not rest the argument merely on his being said to have created *all things*, and the inconsistency of this with his being a

creature himself;—but even on the simple fact of *creation* being ascribed to him *at all*. The fancy that the first of creatures might *instrumentally* be employed to create all the rest, either involves the contradiction of a *creature* possessing *creative* power,—that is, omnipotence;—or it in reality ascribes nothing whatever to that creature but *precedence in time;* for the mere announcement of the Divine order is what the meanest could have done as effectually as the highest.

One of the principal grounds on which the writer above referred to has rested his proof of *instrumental agency* being meant in those places where creation is ascribed to Christ, is the proper meaning of the Greek preposition ΔΙΑ.—This preposition, when governing the genitive, signifies the *efficient cause*. In his Vindication of Unitarianism, Mr. Yates had stated, that in its occurrences in the New Testament "its general applica-" tion, when used to point out an efficient cause, is to represent not the "*primary*, but the *secondary* or *instrumental* cause;"—and in still stronger terms, "that when a New Testament writer employs the preposition ΔΙΑ to " point out the cause of any effect, he means the *instrumental*, and refers to " some other being, either expressly mentioned or contemplated, who is " considered as the *first* or *original* cause."—The preposition, he had alleged, which properly signifies that a thing is done by any one as an *original* cause, is not ΔΙΑ but ΥΠΟ.

In my Reply, I granted that διὰ is more naturally employed to denote the instrumental cause than ὑπὸ; and that this is rightly accounted for from the *original signification* of the word. At the same time I affirmed, that, in the practice of the Greek language, διὰ with the genitive is used to denote the *efficient* cause, whether primary or secondary, principal or instrumental. I produced from the New Testament *eighteen* instances, in which it appeared to me to have the former meaning. They were the following: Matth. xviii. 7: xxvi. 24: Mark xiv. 21: Luke xxii. 22: Acts xii. 9: xix. 26: Rom. iii. 27: v. 12: vi. 4: xi. 36: 1 Cor. i. 9: xii. 8. (compared with ver. 9. where the expression is varied, ΕΝ being used, and with ver. 11.) 2 Cor. i. 19: Heb. ii. 3. (where the reader will observe, that ΔΙΑ and ΥΠΟ are both used, the former of *the Lord*, and the latter of *his Apostles;* so that here we have an instance either of ΔΙΑ being the *immediate*, or of ΥΠΟ being the *mediate* cause) Heb. ii. 10: (a very decisive passage) Heb. vii. 21: xiii. 11: 1 Pet. ii. 14.

In his "SEQUEL to his Vindication of Unitarianism," Mr. Yates has entered into an examination of these passages, with the view of showing that in all of them but one it is *not the primary* but the *secondary* cause that is meant. To deny to his strictures the merit of ingenuity, would be to do him injustice:—but the ingenuity is, in my apprehension, that of hypercritical straining. It is quite unnecessary, in noticing the strictures, to take up each of the passages in succession. It will be enough to state general principles, and illustrate them by two or three exemplifications.

It is very plain, that the proper question is, not *whether we can make for*

ourselves a sense in which the causality may in each case be regarded as secondary or instrumental;—but *whether, when the phrase was used, it was actually so contemplated by the writer.*—That this is the true state of the question, is virtually admitted by Mr. Y. when stating the proper import of the preposition ὑπο:—"I have stated in my Vindication, that the primary "cause is denoted by ΥΠΟ. I have not said, however, that this preposition "is never prefixed to what is, in point of fact, a *secondary* cause. I was "perfectly aware that the case is otherwise. But when ὑπο is used, the cause "is *contemplated* as primary; that is, *no reference* is made to any thing "beyond it:—Whereas ΔΙΑ, according to the canon quoted above, 'denotes "'a reference to some other being, either expressly mentioned or contem-"'plated, which is considered as the original cause.' Of the series of causes, "*in the view of the speaker or writer*, ΥΠΟ always denotes the *first*, and ΔΙΑ "the *intermediate.*" Sequel, p. 44.

Are we not warranted to proceed upon the same principle with regard to ΔΙΑ? We admit, that it most generally denotes the instrumental or secondary cause; but we contend, that it is *often* used when the distinction of primary and secondary, of original and intermediate, is not at all before the mind of the writer;—when it is not "contemplated;"—when there is no reference to any other cause beyond that which is actually mentioned. And in such cases, it is not enough that, by some process of metaphysical casuistry,—by the introduction of certain refined principles and distinctions,—we can make it out that there *is* a cause to which the one actually mentioned is subordinate and instrumental. The question is, was such subordination and instrumentality *in the thought and intention of the writer*, when he made use of the preposition? I am still satisfied, that in most, if not in all, the instances I have adduced, *it was not*, and that in some of them it *could not be.*

When Paul says, 2 Cor. i. 19. "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, which was preached among you *by us*, (δι' ἡμων) even *by* me and Silvanus and Timotheus," &c.—all that is expressed, or, we apprehend, that was meant to be expressed, is, that the act or function of preaching was performed *by* Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus. It is of course *true*, that in preaching they were servants and instruments of God; but the question is, was this intended by the Apostle to be expressed by the use of the preposition?—was there any thing in his phraseology beyond the simple idea of *agency?* I should think not.

When he says, Heb. ii. 3. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord" (δια του κυριου); —had he in his contemplation any prior cause,—or did he not simply intend to express the fact of the Lord's agency?—and might he not, in regard to what he *meant* to convey, have used, with equal propriety the proposition ΥΠΟ? We need not go far for an answer to these questions. We are sure that no more was meant than direct and simple agency, from the actual use of ὑπο in the following clause of the very same sen-

tence, and its use, too, in reference to those subordinate agents who succeeded the Lord in the publication of the gospel. The words are: —"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which having begun to be spoken *by* (διὰ) the Lord, was confirmed unto us *by* (ὑπὸ) them that heard him." Surely, had the idea of subordinate or intermediate agency been intended to be expressed by the writer, he never would have introduced it in connexion with the Lord, and thrown it out in regard to his Apostles;—using the preposition that denotes *instrumentality* respecting the *former*, and that which denotes *direct and original causality* respecting the *latter!* Mr. Yates solves the difficulty respecting the application of ὑπὸ to the agency of the Apostles, by alleging that their instrumentality was not at the time *in the contemplation of the writer*. Strange! And did he indeed use διὰ with the intention of denoting *instrumental* agency in regard to THE LORD, and then, before writing another word, proceed to use ὑπὸ in regard to "those that heard him,"—letting slip all at once the thought of instrumentality, where it was still more natural and appropriate to retain it? Nothing can be clearer, to any one who simply reads the words (ἥτις, ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι ΔΙΑ τοῦ κυρίου, ΥΠΟ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη) than that if the idea of instrumentality was *not contemplated* by the writer when he used the preposition ὑπὸ, neither was it contemplated when he used the preposition διὰ.

Heb. xiii. 11. "The bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by (διὰ) the high priest for sin," &c. No doubt, in this, as in every act that a dependent creature can perform, the High Priest was "the instrument of the Supreme disposer of all events:" but the question is, was any thing beyond direct and simple agency in the contemplation of the writer when he used the words? Let the reader judge.

When Peter says, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king" (the Roman Emperor) "as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent *by him* (δι' αὐτοῦ) for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of them that do well;"—the meaning seems abundantly plain and simple. These governors were sent *by* the Emperor for the purpose mentioned,—the avowed purpose of all government. But Calvin, it seems, and others, have objected, that the Apostle could not intend to represent a mortal so subject to the influence of worse motives, as sending his proconsuls and subordinate officers merely "for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well;" and they have therefore maintained, that "*sent by him*" means "sent by God." "If we interpret ΔΙΑ," says Mr. Y., "in the "sense contended for, the difficulty vanishes. The phrase under consider- "ation represents the governors of the provinces, who had received their "commission from the Roman Emperor, as 'sent BY GOD *through him*, for "'the punishment of evil-doers,'" &c. No doubt the difficulty vanishes. But was there a difficulty to vanish? Is there any more difficulty in supposing Peter to speak of the Roman Emperor as sending the provincial

governors "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well, than there is in Paul's representing the said Emperor himself as —"not a terror to good works, but to the evil—the minister of God for good—not bearing the sword in vain, but a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil;"—and exhorting the Christians at Rome—"Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same? Nothing can be simpler, than that when the king is spoken of "*as supreme*," the subordinate governors should be represented as "sent *by him*"—receiving from him, as the supreme authority, their commission. The sentence in the Greek stands thus:—Ὑποταγητε ουν πασῃ ανθρωπινῃ κτισει, δια τον κυριον· ειτε βασιλει, ὡς ὑπερεχοντι· ειτε ηγεμοσιν, ὡς δι' αυ του πεμπομενοις, εις εκδικησιν κακοποιων, επαινον δε αγαθοποιων. Now the ΔΙ' ΑΥΤΟΥ must have one or other of two antecedents; either ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙ, the *immediate*, or ΚΥΡΙΟΝ, the *remote*. The former appears to me the more natural—Notwithstanding what Calvin says, "qui pronomen *eum* (αυτου) ad regem referunt, multum falluntur." If any with him shall plead for the latter; then, (to a Unitarian at least), as one difficulty vanishes, another arises. For the preceding context will not allow us to doubt whom Peter means when he exhorts Christians "for THE LORD'S sake." He had just before said—"If so be ye have tasted that THE LORD is gracious: TO WHOM coming, as unto a LIVING STONE," &c. This is THE LORD—the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name he admonishes them; which converts the passages into a proof of his Divine supremacy.

Mr. Yates considers the words δι' αυτου as referring to *the king*, but would translate them *through him*, and *supply* the additional words BY GOD. But there is no need for either change or supplement. "Those that are sent by him" are the subordinate governors appointed either *by the king* as supreme, or *by the Lord*, as "king of kings" and "governor among the nations." Whichsoever of the two antecedents we prefer, the meaning of the preposition remains the same.

It is very true, that when any thing whatever is said to be done by a creature, the agency must, from the nature of the thing, be always subordinate and instrumental. But will Mr. Yates venture to say, that this idea was always in the contemplation of the scripture writers when they used the preposition δια? or will he venture to say, that in the classical practice of the language the idea of some superior agency was always present to the author's mind when that preposition was employed? He alleges that "by the world at large the Emperor was worshipped as himself a God; "and a Heathen would have said that the Governors of the provinces "were sent (ΥΠ' αυτου) BY *him*;" but that "the apostle, with an admirable "union of manliness and piety, guards against this idolatrous adulation, "teaches that even the CÆSARS were only instruments in the hands of a "superior, and preserves the due distinction between the subordinate rulers "of the civil world, and that Being by whom 'every power that exists is "'ordained,' and who 'hath the hearts of kings in his hand, turning them "'whithersoever he will, as the rivers of waters.'" The sentiment thus

expressed is just and excellent; but to deduce all this from the use of the preposition διὰ instead of ὑπὸ, is weak, and almost ludicrous.

One would be led to suppose from such a statement, that the inspired writers were very particular and discriminate in their use of the two words διὰ and ὑπὸ, and very cautious how they used the one for original and the other for subordinate agency. But this is far from being the case. The reader may go through the rest of the eighteen passages adduced by me; and, with regard to most of them at least, he will, I think, be satisfied, that ΔΙΑ is used when superior agency is *not* at the time in the contemplation of the writer. The same thing may be easily shown with regard to ΥΠΟ; namely, that they used it without scruple when superior agency *was* in their contemplation. On Mr. Yates's principle, indeed, we should hardly expect to find them using ὑπὸ as to created agency at all; inasmuch as all created agency must necessarily be dependent and instrumental. Nay, were we to take up the texts in which ὑπὸ is applied to created agency, and treat them as Mr. Yates has treated those in which διὰ is conceived by us to signify original causality,—in which, that is, the idea of instrumentality is not in the contemplation of the writer,—it would be no difficult matter to make out a good case for the preposition, that ὑπὸ was not, and could not be, any more than διὰ, significant of any thing else than secondary or instrumental agency.

In one or two instances, surprise is expressed, that a Christian, and especially a Calvinist, should quote passages in proof of διὰ meaning direct agency, when understanding the preposition in this way would represent the events as happening "independently of the appointment of God." Now, upon this principle, what, in many instances, should we make of the use of ΥΠΟ?—For example, in giving the account of the woman with the issue of blood that was cured by Christ, Luke says she had spent all her money upon physicians, and could not be healed of any—ΥΠ' οὐδενος. What! we might ask, can any physician ever heal a disease "independently of the appointment of God?" ΥΠΟ *must* surely mean here not direct but instrumental agency. Had the preposition διὰ been used, Mr. Y. might have found in it an admirable instance of the care with which the inspired writers keep us in mind that all human agency is subordinate, and that "all things are of God."

"Every house," says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "is builded by some man"—ΥΠΟ τινος; and yet in the very next clause the supreme agency of Deity is expressly introduced and recognized: "but he that built all things is God."—Heb. iii. 4. Why then was not διὰ used?

"Woe unto that man," said Christ, "*by whom* (δι' οὗ) the Son of man is betrayed." "Was Judas, then," says Mr. Yates, "an original cause? and "was the salvation of the world by the death of Christ left to depend upon "the uncontrolled power and discretion of an insignificant mortal;"—and he considers Jesus as purposely using this preposition to express the idea that Judas was only the *instrument* of effecting the determinate purpose of

God. That he *was* so, no one disputes. But Jesus himself was not thus particular in the use of the two prepositions. Speaking of the Jews he says, in another place—"even so must the Son of man suffer of them"—ΥΠ αυτων. According to Mr. Yates's distinction, the wicked Jews are by this expression recognized as "original causes," acting by their own "uncontrolled power and discretion."

"Behold also the ships," says James, "which—are turned about by (ΥΠΟ) a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth." Surely if there be such a thing as *instrumental* agency, that of the helm of a ship is such. There is indeed a twofold instrumentality. The helm is under the direction of the pilot's will; and the pilot's will is under the control of the Supreme Ruler. Yet the preposition used is not ΔΙΑ but ΥΠΟ.

The manner in which Mr. Yates disposes of the two passages—Rom. xi. 36., and Heb. ii. 10., is to me not very intelligible. In the former passage, it is said—"Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." Mr. Yates alleges that in the middle clause—"through him"—δι' αυτου—"δια is "not intended to 'point out the cause of any effect,' but is used in its "original acceptation as denoting motion through a place."—"The descrip-"tion of God," he says, "given in these words, is, that all things *proceed* "*from him, go through him,* and *end in him.* It is one out of the various "views of the imagination, and forms of human speech, employed in scrip-"ture to represent, as far as language can, the absolute dominion, the "omnipresence, and the universal providence of the divinity." He proceeds to quote Milton, and Pope, and Johnson, and the Orphic theology, and Marcus Antoninus, for parallels to the apostolic metaphor; and concludes by saying, in terms which doubtless would have made the modest apostle blush—(yet not, I think, from modesty but from indignant shame)—"the description is worthy of an Author, who was acquainted with the "writings of the Heathen poets and philosophers, and was warmed with the "fire of celestial genius as well as with the Divine influences of preternatural "inspiration!"—And so Paul borrows his sublime description of Deity from that "wisdom" by which "the world knew not God!" I cannot but fancy he would have thought this one of the most inappropriate and offensive compliments that could well be paid to him.

But what is the meaning of all things "proceeding from God, *going through God*, and ending in God?"—Mr. Yates tells us, that in the middle clause the preposition is to be understood "in its *original acceptation* as "denoting *motion through a place.*" Does he mean that it is to be taken *literally?* No: for he speaks of the passage as *metaphorical.* Now, we are at no loss with the metaphor supposing it to be one; that all things *proceed from God.* Can it mean any thing else than that God is the *originator* of all things? As little are we at a loss when all things are said to *end in God:* Mr. Yates himself explains it of God being "the *end aimed at* in all things, or to which all things tend:—i. e. God" (which can mean only the manifestation of his name and glory) "is the FINAL *cause,* in

all the works and ways of creation and providence." What then is the import of the remaining part of the metaphor, if a metaphor we must call it—all things *going through God?* When Mr. Yates affirms that διὰ is to be understood "in its original acceptation as denoting motion through a place," we should be apt to conceive that we are to take the phrase literally and physically; and then, it must have meant, that, as God's essence pervades space, all things exist in God, and pass through God, as all things exist in space and pass through space. But this is too gross. He says afterwards, that "the METAPHOR implied in the associated phrases (ἐξ αὐτου and εἰς αὐτον) "*out of him*," and "*to him*" should be kept up in the intermediate clause (δι' αὐτου) "*through him.*" Now if "ἐξ αὐτου, *from him*" means that He is the *Originator* of all things, and "εἰς αὐτον, *to him*," that he is the *final end* of all things, what can "δι' αὐτου, *by* or *through him*" mean, if not his being the *efficient preserver and governor* of all things? This renders the description complete, definite, and sublime; without fancying the inspired apostle under obligations to the poets, or philosophers, or theologians of Heathenism, for a metaphor, which, whatever there might be in it of the "celestial fire of genius," had but little of the intelligible simplicity of revelation:—"all things proceed from God, *go through God!* and end in God."

It is to this same metaphor Mr. Yates has recourse on Heb. ii. 10. "It became him *for* whom are all things, and *by* whom are all things." He admits the passage to be a very decisive one, "if it could be proved that ΔΙΑ is here employed to represent God as the *efficient cause* of all things." But he thinks "there is no necessity for this supposition." Understanding the former clause "FOR whom are all things" as meaning, (like the las clause in Rom. xi. 36.) that God is the FINAL *cause*, or the END aimed at in all things; he "conceives, especially considering how familiar this view "was to the minds of the ancients, that the writer to the Hebrews, "although he states the idea less distinctly, intends, by the same metaphor, "to represent all things as *passing through God*, and *to* Him as their end." —I will not pretend to decide whether the writer to the Romans or the writer to the Hebrews (generally, and I am satisfied justly, believed to be the same) expresses the idea most distinctly; for in truth, there is a sad lack of distinctness in the idea itself. I have tried my wits upon it: and I must honestly confess, that if any reader has a distinct conception in his mind of what is meant by all things *passing through God*, he is gifted with a larger share of penetration than has fallen to my lot.

NOTE O, page 162.

Mr. Belsham, in the following passage, admirably expresses the difficulty with which his system is loaded, from what is said in the Scriptures respecting Christ's *judging the world;* and at the same time shows how strongly this difficulty was felt by him:—"From these declarations, it is "concluded, that Jesus is appointed to appear in person to raise the dead,

"to judge the world, and to award to every individual of the human race his "final sentence of reward or punishment. This is an office of such transcend- "ent dignity and importance, and requires powers so far superior to any thing "we can conceive to belong to a mere human being, however meritorious and "exalted, that to many it appears utterly incredible, that such an office should "be assigned to one who was himself at one time a peccable and fallible "man, and, as such, liable to appear at the tribunal of eternal justice. The "righteous Judge of the whole earth, the unerring arbiter of the destinies of "all the innumerable generations of mankind, must surely be a personage of "rank far superior to any who shall then be summoned to his tribunal. This "argument has appeared so forcible to some persons of much learning and "reflection, that this consideration alone has prevented them from acceding "to the Unitarian hypothesis, though they have acknowledged that particular "texts might admit of a satisfactory explication upon Unitarian principles.— "That this is a great difficulty cannot be denied; but possibly it may be "alleviated by attention to the following considerations." Would to God that Mr. B. instead of seeking to alleviate this difficulty, had at once admitted it to be insuperable, and acknowledged the appointed Judge to be *Divine!* But instead of this, how does he proceed? He first takes for granted, that when the apostle speaks of God's judging the world "by that MAN whom he hath ordained," he affirms the *mere* humanity of Jesus; and then infers that, whatever our prejudices may suggest to the contrary, it is, in fact, not inconsistent with Divine wisdom, nor with the reason and order of things, that *a human being*—(i. e. a *mere man*)—should be appointed to the office of universal Judge!!—"Jesus and his apostles, he says, do not appear to have "felt any difficulty in the appointment of a human being to the office of uni- "versal Judge."—True—and the obvious reason is, that the human being of whom they speak, possessed, at the same time a higher nature than the human. There is no accounting for it otherwise. For the supposition of a *mere man like ourselves* executing the office of universal Judge, is one so monstrous, so contradictory to every idea we can form of what is *fit*, and *reasonable*, and *possible*, as to require for its admission, a larger portion of credulity than that which Mr. B. and his friends affect to despise.—The difficulty is not removed by the supposition of any powers, however enlarged, in whatever way acquired, whether gradually, or by communication for the purpose, if they are still powers, as they must be, limited by the capacity of a being *merely human*. I should even apply the same remark to the most exalted of created natures. Divest the Judge of his Divine Majesty; and you render it impossible to feel, in anticipating our appearance before him, that trembling awe which the thought of the future judgment ought always to inspire. We do not feel as if satisfied with his decisions. The necessity of instant unquestioning submission, under which the mind sinks in the contemplation of a Divine Judge, ceases to impress it. We begin immediately to think of possible errors, and of appeal to higher authority.—If, indeed, this judge were to be not properly a judge at all, but a mere *pronouncer of sentences*, dictated by the Supreme Jehovah, the case might be

different: but if this creature is to be, *bona fide*, in the true and proper sense, THE JUDGE of mankind, some such feeling as that which I have described, does appear to me unavoidable: and for this plain reason, that our minds revolt from the absurdity of any knowledge short of *omniscience* forming a sufficient qualification for *infallible judgment;* and this omniscience, we know, cannot be possessed by a creature. An attempt has been made to invalidate this conclusion, by comparing this world with the immensity of the universe, and deducing the inference, that the measure of knowledge which would qualify for the final judgment is after all but "an inconceivably small portion of God's own "knowledge,—a portion far less than the wisest parent communicates to his "child, when he tells him the sound of the first letter in the alphabet."—(Yates's Sequel, &c.)—There is ingenuity,—there is even, I will admit, sublimity in this conception: but there is no sound logic. It is enough to say in reply, where are we to stop? What kind or what measure of knowledge can be admitted as the proof of divinity? It is evident, that of every degree of it, so long as it continues finite, the same observation might be made; for whatever is finite must always be incomparably less than what is infinite. The knowledge, in clear and perfect remembrance—(a remembrance, the result of the universal and unerring observation of each successive moment,)—of all the words and actions, and of all the principles and motives and thoughts, of all the countless millions of mankind, who shall have existed before the day of final accounts, is a knowledge which may be ingeniously, and, if you will, sublimely, regarded as comparatively small; yet it is, both in its peculiar nature, and in the vastness of its extent, such as we feel it impossible to ascribe to a fellow-man or a fellow-creature, without being sensible that all our notions of created and Divine are immediately confounded;—and, moreover, that a great proportion of the language of scripture is rendered nugatory: for the knowledge which we thus suppose communicated is, in kind and in measure, the very knowledge which Jehovah, the true God, appropriates to himself, and by the possession of which he distinguishes himself from all creatures, and from all the false gods of the Heathen. Let any one read the scriptures, to find those passages in which Deity is thus distinguished by the attribute of knowledge; and I think he will find the references far more frequent to our own world, and the generations of its inhabitants, than to the universe with its millions of suns and systems, and its unnumbered multitudes and varieties of living and rational creatures. It may be very true that this globe of ours is but a speck in the universe; but if it be also true, that the Bible gives us little or no information about other worlds, and that the knowledge by which its Creator marks his Godhead is chiefly knowledge, of which this little speck is the scene,—we ought surely to be jealous of every attempt to reduce and slight it, as no more than what might be imparted to the mind of an intelligent creature.

NOTE P, page 206.

In preparing and delivering the discourses in this volume, my object was, to make a suitable *selection* of scriptural proofs under each article of dis-

cussion, such as might be sufficient for the purpose of my argument, without becoming tedious to the attention, and burdensome and possibly confusing to the mind of the hearer. It may be worth while, however, to show the reader, in contradiction to the uncandid insinuation of the adversary, that our stock of proofs is not, by any means, exhausted. I have judged it best to preserve the Discourses, with few exceptions, in their original state, without unduly lengthening and overloading them,—and to present the additional passages in a Note. They all relate to the Divinity of Christ; and I shall follow no particular arrangement in bringing them forward.

1. In Psalm lxxviii. 18, and 56, it is said of the Israelites in the wilderness:—"They TEMPTED GOD in their heart, by asking meat for their lust:" "They TEMPTED and provoked the MOST HIGH GOD, and kept not his testi-"monies." In drawing instruction and admonition from their conduct and experience, the apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. x. 9. "Neither let us TEMPT CHRIST, "as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." "These "texts do both relate to the same rebellious acts of the Israelites in the "wilderness. In the former of them, the person whom they tempted is "called the *most High God:* in the latter, he is called *Christ:* therefore "*Christ* is *the most High God;*"* and the sin of *tempting* CHRIST, against which Christians are admonished, is the very same, in nature and in guilt, with the sin committed by the Israelites in *tempting* JEHOVAH.

2. Isa. viii. 13, 14. "Sanctify THE LORD OF HOSTS himself; and let HIM "be your fear, and let HIM be your dread, and HE shall be for a sanctuary; "but for a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, to both the houses of "Israel."—"He who was to be a stumbling stone, and a rock of offence, is "called by Isaiah, the LORD OF HOSTS; and he bids the children of Israel "'*sanctify*,' (honour, worship, and magnify) '*him*, and make him their fear "'and their dread.' "*Fear* is here put for the *object* of fear, which is GOD: "but the apostles Paul and Peter apply this expressly to CHRIST.—Rom. "ix. 32, 33. 'They stumbled at *the stumbling stone;* as it is written, Behold, "'I lay in Zion a stumbling stone, and rock of offence; and whosoever "'believeth in him (Christ) shall not be ashamed.'—1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. 'Unto "'you, therefore, who believe, *he* (Jesus Christ) is precious; but unto them "'who are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same "'is made the head of the corner, and *a stone of stumbling*, and *a rock of* "'*offence*, to those who stumble at the word.' Therefore, JESUS CHRIST is "the LORD OF HOSTS;—is to be *sanctified, (worshipped,* and *magnified,)* "and is the *true object* of *religious fear* and *reverence.*"†

3. Psal. xcvii. 7. "Worship him, all ye gods:"—compared with Heb. i. 6. "When he bringeth in his first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let

* Jones on the Cath. Doct. of the Trinity, p. 6.

† "A clear display of the Trinity from Divine Revelation; with an impartial "examination of some traditions concerning God, in systems contrived by coun-"cils, assemblies and synods, and imposed upon mankind as articles of faith, &c. "By A. M. a Layman.—London, 1773."

" all the angels of God worship him." " That glorious and magnificent " description in the ninety-seventh Psalm, is of one, who in several parts of " it, is called JEHOVAH, and *worship* commanded to be given to him; 'Wor- " 'ship him all ye gods.' But the apostle says, it was the SON OF GOD " who was spoken of in that sacred hymn. Therefore HE is JEHOVAH *to* " *whom divine worship is due*, and *of whom* the glorious things in that Psalm " are said, proper to none but the *true God*."* " If," says Bishop Horsley, " in argument with any of the false teachers of the present day, I were to " allege this text of the Psalm in proof of our Lord's divinity, my antagonist " would probably reply, that our Lord is not once mentioned in the Psalm; " that the subject of the Psalm is an assertion of the proper divinity of " Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, as distinguished from the imaginary " deities which the heathen worshipped. This Psalm, therefore, which " proposes Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, as the sole object of worship " to men and angels, is alleged, he would say, to no purpose, in justification " of worship paid to another person. And to any one who might know " nothing more of the true sense of this passage than may appear in the " words taken by themselves, my adversary might seem to have the better " in the argument. I think I should seem to myself to stand confuted, if I " knew no more of the meaning of my text, or rather of the inspired song " of which it makes a part, than an inattentive reader might collect from a " hasty view of its general purport. But observe the references on the " margin of the Bible, and you will find that a parallel passage occurs in the " Epistle to the Hebrews, in the first chapter at the sixth verse. Turn to " this passage of the Epistle, and there you will find this text of the Psalmist " cited by St. Paul to this very purpose, namely, to prove that adoration is " due from the blessed angels of God to the only-begotten Son: for thus " he reasons: 'When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world he " 'saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.' The only passage in " the Old Testament, as the Hebrew text now stands, is this seventh verse " of the ninety-seventh Psalm. The words of the Psalmist, indeed, are " these, 'Worship him, all ye gods.' The Apostle, that he might clearly " exclude a plurality of gods while he asserts the Godhead of the Son, " thinks proper to explain the Psalmist's words by substituting, 'all the " 'angels of God' for 'all the gods.' But it is very evident, that the first- " begotten was, in the Apostle's judgment, the object of worship propounded " by the Psalmist, otherwise these words of the Psalmist, in which he calls " upon the angels to worship Jehovah, were alleged to no purpose in proof " of the Son's natural pre-eminence above the angels. For either the Son " is the object of worship intended by the Psalmist, or the Son himself is to " bear a part in the worship so universally enjoined."†

* A Clear Display of the Trinity, &c., by A. M.

† Nine Sermons on the nature of the evidence by which the fact of our Lord's resurrection is established, and on various other subjects. Pages 228—231.

4. Isa. liv. 5. "Thy Maker is thy Husband,—the Lord (Jehovah) of "hosts is his name: and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God "of the whole earth shall he be called." "The *Husband*, or *Bridegroom*, "of the church, and her *Redeemer*, is here called the LORD OF HOSTS, and "the GOD OF THE WHOLE EARTH. But *Jesus Christ* is *Husband* or *Bride-*"*groom*, and *Redeemer* of the church.—Eph. v. 23. 'The husband is the "'head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.' Rev. xix. "7. 'Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the *mar-*"*riage of the Lamb* is come, and *his Wife* hath made herself ready.'—Rev. "xxi. 9. 'Come hither, and I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife.' "Gal. iii. 13. '*Christ* hath *redeemed* us from the curse of the law.'—Col. i. "14. 'In whom we have *redemption* through his blood,' &c. JESUS CHRIST, "therefore, is the LORD OF HOSTS, the GOD OF THE WHOLE EARTH."*

5. Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. "The chariots of GOD are twenty thousand, "thousands of angels; JEHOVAH is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy "place. Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, "thou hast received gifts for men."—Eph. iv. 7, 8. "But unto every one "of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Where-"fore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and "gave gifts unto men." According to the Psalmist, it was GOD, JEHOVAH, that ascended up on high: according to the apostle, it was CHRIST.

6. Jude, verses 24, 25. "Now unto him who is able to keep you from "falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with "exceeding joy; to God alone our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord,† "be glory and majesty, dominion and power, (as) from eternity, so now, "and to eternity, Amen." That which God the Father is, in these words, represented as able, and alone able, to do, is declared elsewhere to be done by Jesus Christ: "CHRIST loved the church, and gave himself for it, that "HE might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; "that he might *present it* TO HIMSELF (αὐτῷ ἑαυτῷ, Griesbach) a glorious "church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should "be holy, and without blemish." Christ, then, is, in power, and purpose, and operation, one with the Father, and shares with him the glory arising from the final salvation of the church.

7. The principle which applies to so many passages of the *New* Testament, of Jesus Christ being spoken of under the two characters of a Divine person, and "the Mediator between God and men," the servant of Jehovah, furnishes the most reasonable ground of interpretation for some parts of the *Old*.

Isaiah, chap. L.—The chapter begins with "THUS SAITH JEHOVAH;" and there is not the least intimation of any change of speaker. The same

* Clear Display of the Trinity, &c. by A. M.

† I follow, in translating this verse, the text of Griesbach, although the common version would afford an argument still more powerful.

speaker, so far as appears, who says, in the third verse, "I clothe the "heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering," says, in the sixth, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked "off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." The same speaker, resuming the style of Deity, says of his enemies, in the close of the chapter, "This shall ye have of MY hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow:" and goes on, in the beginning of the chapter following, to say of Abraham, "I CALLED HIM alone, and blessed him, and increased him." Suppose this speaker throughout to be Messiah "in the form of God," and Messiah "in "the form of a servant, and the likeness of men," and all is simple and harmonious: whereas the supposition of a change of speaker at verse 4th, where the style of inferiority commences, and a change again, where this style ceases, requires very considerable violence; the more especially, as the things that are said in verses 4—9, are in many respects inapplicable to the prophet himself, while they are strikingly applicable to the promised Redeemer.

8. Isaiah xl. 9—11. In the preceding verses of the chapter, we have the proclamation of the predicted forerunner of THE MESSIAH: "The voice of "him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH; make "straight in the desert a high-way for our God." The application of these words to CHRIST we have formerly considered. But the same person whom the forerunner was to announce is the subject of the proclamation in the 9th verse, "Say unto the cities of Judah, BEHOLD YOUR GOD!" And it is He whose Divine authority and pastoral care are described in the following verses: "Behold, the Lord GOD (or the Lord JEHOVAH) will come with "strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold his reward is with "him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: "he shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and "shall gently lead those that are with young." To confirm the reference of these words to Christ, the reader may compare them with Isa. xlix. 8—10. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 64. John x. 11—16. Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 25. v. 4, &c.

9. Zech. ii. 8, 9. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath "he sent me unto the nations that spoiled you; for he that toucheth you "toucheth the apple of his eye. For behold I will shake my hand upon them, "and they shall be a spoil to their servants; and ye shall know that the Lord "of hosts hath sent me." "The language of this proclamation first claims "our attention. The Lord of hosts is the speaker: (v. 8.) yet he speaks "as one that is sent: at the same time he says, 'I will shake my hand upon "'them;' 'by this ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me.' "The language shows, that not the prophet, but he that spake by him, was "intended. There are evidently two persons called here 'the Lord of "'hosts;' one who is sent, and the other He who sent him: even the Son "of God, and the Father who sent him, as his willing Messenger, to be the "Saviour of his people. Thus *relatively*, as well as in his human nature

" he condescended to be inferior to the Father, though he claimed to be " *naturally* equal, as ONE with him in the unity of the Godhead. And had " not the prophet, or rather the Holy Spirit who spake by him, considered " the promised Messiah as JEHOVAH SABAOTH, IMMANUEL, such language " would not have been used; for it would have had an evident tendency to " mislead us. This must necessarily be understood of Christ, who, being " God equal with the Father, was sent, as he was Mediator, to dwell in his " church."*

10. Matt. xi. 27. with its parallel, Luke x. 22. " All things are delivered " unto me of my Father; and no man (more properly *no one*) knoweth the " Son but the Father, neither knoweth any one the Father save the Son, " and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." But, if Jesus was a mere human prophet, this is surely very singular and unaccountable language The Father and the Son are here represented as having, reciprocally, a full and immediate knowledge of each other, of which *no one else* is possessed The mode of expression leads us to conceive of the knowledge which the Father has of the Son, as being the same in kind and in degree with that which the Son has of the Father; no full and immediate knowledge *of either* being possessed by any other being. " The meaning is," say the Editors of the Improved Verson, " that no one but the Father can fully comprehend " the object and extent of the Son's commission; and no one but the Son " comprehends the counsels and designs of the Father with respect to the " instruction and reformation of mankind." But why is the knowledge of the Father to be interpreted as meaning the knowledge of *a particular part of his counsels*, and not the knowledge of HIMSELF? The *latter* is surely its most natural import, and it is supported by such parallel passages as John i. 18. " No man hath seen God at any time; the only-" begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him:" John vi. 46. " Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he who is of " God, he hath seen the Father." What was there, we may further ask, in the idea of a human prophet, commissioned to teach to mankind the certainty of a future state, and the necessity of a life of virtue to the attainment of happiness in that state,—what was there in this idea that rendered it so peculiarly wonderful, so entirely above created conception;—as incomprehensible by any besides Jehovah, as the nature of Jehovah himself? The difficulty here does not consist merely in this prophet placing *his* knowledge of *God* on an equality with *God's* knowledge of *him*; but in his representing *himself* and the *infinite Jehovah* as reciprocally, and equally, the objects of knowledge to each other, in a sense that excludes all other beings, on both sides alike, from any participation in it. Again:—the knowledge of the Son, ascribed to the Father, and the knowledge of the Father ascribed to the Son, are, by the comment of the Improved Version, perfectly *identified*. To know " the counsels and designs of the Father respecting the instruction

* Scott's Commentary on the place.

" and reformation of mankind," is the very same thing, (especially on Unitarian principles as to the work of Christ) with knowing " the object and extent " of the Son's commission." When we recollect the words of the prophet —" his Name shall be called WONDERFUL," and think of the " child born " and the son given" as " the mighty God"—we have then a full explanation of our Lord's words;—but no other view yields any thing satisfactory.

11. Matth. xxiii. 37. " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the " prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I " have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens " under her wings, and ye would not!"

On this passage observe, in the first place;—it appears irresistibly evident, that Jesus refers in it to the preceding history of the Jewish people, and to the whole course of the Divine dealings with them by the prophets. The expression " *how often*," can never, with any propriety, be restricted to the occasional warnings of his public ministry, which lasted only three years, and during which Jerusalem was very seldom favoured with his personal presence. The whole context confirms the observation. He had just been reminding them of the conduct of their fathers to the messengers of God, and assuring them that the blood of all the prophets, from Abel to Zacharias, should be required of that generation. He draws the character of Jerusalem from her past history, " Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them " that are sent unto thee." It was HE that sent these prophets:—it was by their monitory voice that he " would have gathered the children of " Jerusalem together:"—it was *then* that they " *would not.*" His language corresponds exactly with that addressed to them by Jehovah of old:— " They have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord, which I sent unto " them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending; but *ye* " *would not hear*, saith the Lord."*

2dly. In the preceding context, Jesus, having mentioned, in terms of cutting irony, the hypocritical protestations of the Pharisees of his day, that " if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would not have been " partakers with them in the blood of the prophets," says to them; " Where- " fore, behold *I* send unto *you*, prophets and wise men and scribes; and " some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge " in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city." What is this but saying: You are vehement in these protestations; you disavow the bloody deeds of your rebellious forefathers: I will put to trial the sincerity of these professions: I will bring you to the test, and let you discover, when you are placed in similar circumstances, whether you are not children of these persecutors, in *character*, as well as by natural lineage: I, who sent the prophets to your fathers, will send prophets also to *you*; and your conduct to them will show what is in your hearts, and identify you with your

* Jer. xxix. 19. also chap. vii. 13. 25—27. xxv. 4—7. &c.

ungodly and cruel progenitors, giving you the opportunity, "ye serpents, ye "generation of vipers," to "fill up the measure" of their sins.

3dly. These remarks are further confirmed by the resemblance between the manner in which our Lord expresses himself, and the style of the Old Testament Scriptures in reference to the care and protection of Jehovah.—Ruth ii. 12. "A full reward be given thee of Jehovah, the God of Israel, "under whose wings thou art come to trust:"—Psal. xvii. 8. "Hide me "under the shadow of thy wings:"—Psal. xxxvi. 7. "Therefore do the "sons of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings:"—Psal. lvii. 1. "In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities "be overpast:"—Psal. lxi. 4. "I will trust in the covert of thy wings:"—Psal. xci. 4. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings "shalt thou trust."

4thly. Make the supposition, unreasonable as it is, that our Lord, in this passage, refers only to the period of his own public ministry;—then we still ask, what mere human prophet, what mere created messenger, could ever use terms like these, with regard to *his own* protecting power? Surely there was no wing but the wing of omnipotence, under which Jerusalem could find security. It was under *this* wing, without doubt, that Jesus "would have gathered her children." Yet he speaks expressly of his inviting them *to himself;*—offering them *his own* protection; stretching forth the wing of *his own* power and grace, to cover them from harm.

I cannot but consider this passage as containing most conclusive evidence that JESUS OF NAZARETH was JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF ISRAEL. I do not think it is capable of a fair and reasonable explanation on any other hypothesis.

12. Luke xxi. 15. "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all "your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." Let the reader compare with this text, Exod. iv. 11, 12. Prov. ii. 6. Jer. i. 9. Acts ii. 4. Jam. i. 5. "In these texts it is declared, that it belongeth to Jehovah "alone, to make, or to open, man's mouth, or to give wisdom. Yet Jesus, "during his lowest humiliation on earth, in the most express and explicit "terms, promised to give his disciples 'a mouth and wisdom which none of "'their adversaries should be able to gainsay or resist.' Such texts are "seldom adduced in argumentative discourses on our Lord's deity, or on "the doctrine of the Trinity; but they are of immense importance in these "controversies; and the inference from them cannot so easily be evaded as "that may which is deduced from express declarations on these subjects. "For the learned and ingenious opponents of these great mysteries of "Christianity have long been employed in searching for some other read-"ing, or some plausible criticism, on these texts, which form apparently the "grand pillars of our system; but they are more vulnerable when the assault "is less expected. Most certainly, however, our Lord here promises to per-"form the work of God, which other Scriptures declare to belong incom-"municably to him. Yet the same things are also ascribed to the Holy

" Spirit: and *unbiassed* common sense will show any man what the conclusion " must be, according to the sacred oracles."*

13. John xiv. 8—10. " Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, " and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him; Have I been so long time with " you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me " hath seen the Father? and how sayest thou, then, Show us the Father? " Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the " words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that " dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

The words that Christ spoke, it is true, he here declares, were not " *of himself:*"—that is, what he taught was not of *his own* mind, or *his own authority* only. A part of his doctrine *related to himself;*—as, for example, in this very passage. But his testimony with regard to himself, it was obviously necessary, should have other attestations besides his own. *Whatever he was* himself, he must not be the *sole witness* of it. Compare John v. 31—37. To prove, accordingly, that the doctrine taught by him was not " *of* " *himself,*" he appeals here, as he does in the passage just referred to, to his miracles, as wrought by the power of the Father—" The Father that dwelleth " in me, HE doeth the works:"—that is, HE attests the doctrine to be *his;* and particularly, attests the truth of what Jesus, on this and on other occasions, affirms concerning himself. What, then, is it which he *does* affirm in this passage?—that, in *knowing him,* they *knew the Father;* that, in *seeing him,* they *saw the Father. Knowing and seeing* do not here mean, *understanding what was taught concerning the Father.* For Philip's request, " *Show us the* " *Father,*" did not express a desire to be *taught what God was,* but to be favoured with some peculiar manifestation of the Divine glory, similar, perhaps, to those visions recorded in some parts of the Old Testament history. It is to *this* request, that Jesus answers, " He that hath *seen* ME hath *seen* " THE FATHER; and how sayest thou, then, *Show us the Father?*" And does not this answer imply, that there was in his character, as seen by them, something altogether above what mere human nature had ever exhibited? —an untainted purity, and a sublime elevation, such as *ought* to have impressed all their minds with the conviction of his being *more than man?* " Our Lord could not intend natural vision: for in that sense, 'no man hath " 'seen, or can see, the King eternal, immortal, invisible;' and many had " enjoyed an ocular, frequent, and intimate sight of Jesus Christ, who " remained totally insensible to his glory, and to the glory of God in him. " He must, therefore, have meaned such a mental perception of his moral " excellency and worth as would lead to correspondent affections towards " him: and his words imply, that those affections exercised towards him- " self were, as really, and by the very act, exercised towards God."— Smith's Script. Test. to the Messiah, vol. ii. p. 322. The language contains a reproof for their dulness of apprehension, and slowness of heart to believe.

* Scott's Commentary.

Of the character of Christ, I am satisfied, we can form but very inadequate conceptions. He was "the brightness of the Father's glory." The perfections of Deity were, in him, exhibited to the view of men—and especially of Philip and his fellow-disciples. And his character, according to the appeal which he here makes to them, bore upon it the *impress of divinity* in such a way, as to render them *without excuse* if they did not perceive and acknowledge it. They "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten "of the Father." What he adds here, "Believe me, that I am in the "Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me on account of the works "themselves,"—is the same with what he said to the Jews, John x. 38, in repelling from himself the charge of blasphemy; and it was interpreted, and rightly interpreted, by them, as the same in import with the saying on which the charge was founded, "*I and my Father are one.*"

14. Col. iii. 13. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, "if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also "do ye."

Christians are, in these words, exhorted to forgive those by whom they have been injured; and the exhortation is enforced by the example of Christ in forgiving themselves. But, if there be any propriety in the comparison between Christ's conduct and the conduct recommended, the wrongs forgiven by Christ must be viewed as having been committed *against himself.* Now, let us recollect who they were who are here addressed. They were chiefly *Gentile converts,* who never had any intercourse with the Jewish Messiah, and never, consequently, any opportunity of doing him personal injury. Yet the sins, it appears, which these Gentiles had committed previously to their embracing the faith of the gospel, *were committed against Christ. He* was disobeyed;—*he* was dishonoured. But how was this possible, unless Christ was the Supreme God, the Creator, Lawgiver, and Ruler of the world, of whose authority all sin is the violation? To this it is no sufficient reply to allege, that Christ might, *in the name of God, communicate the intimation of pardon,* or be himself the *instrument of obtaining it:* for, on that supposition, the cases stated in the text are very far from being parallel; and those whom Paul exhorts might have replied with truth, that Christ had set no such example, none of them having ever transgressed against *him.* The whole force and influence of the comparison lies clearly in this,—that Christ, having freely forgiven them wrongs so great committed against *him,* it became them, as his followers, to forgive each other the wrongs committed against themselves. According to the judgment of the Apostle, then, Jesus Christ must be HE against whom men trespass, even although they have not known him, and have never been blessed with any revelation of the Messiah, the Saviour of the world:—which could not be the case, unless he stood to them in the relation of their God, to whom they were subject and accountable as the creatures of his hand.—[See Royaards' Diatribe de Divinitate Jesu Christi vera, pp. 170—172.]

It was at one time my intention to have entered into some discussion

relative to the ANGEL who appears so frequently in the Old Testament history, and who *speaks* and is *spoken of*, and *spoken to*, under the appellation and character of JEHOVAH. This work, however, has already extended so very far beyond my original expectation, that I am now still disposed, as before, to decline entering on this branch of the subject.

I shall add to these proofs, (which might still be greatly multiplied,) a single general observation. In putting to death "the Lord of glory," the Jews perpetrated a crime of nameless atrocity;—so clear and so numberless were the evidences which he exhibited of the validity of his claims. Yet, by the law of Moses, the sin of blasphemy exposed the transgressor to death: and, if Jesus could have been convicted of the sin, that law would not only have justified, but would have imperiously required a capital infliction. Now, if he was a mere creature, and yet "made himself equal with God," he *was* guilty and flagrantly guilty too.—We know that, on different occasions, he expressed himself in such a way, that the Jews thought he *did* claim this equality with God. Was this, then, a purely malicious interpretation of his words? Was there nothing in his mode of speech that was at all fitted to convey any such impression to their minds? If there was *not*, the guilt was entirely their own. But if there *was*, then, in proportion as this was the case, their guilt was evidently extenuated. And was not this guilt still further extenuated, if, when they had fallen into the mistake, and brought forward their charge, the imputation, instead of being instantly and explicitly disowned and repelled, was met in such terms, as served to confirm, rather than to dissipate, the impression of its truth? When, indeed, we take into view all that Jesus said of himself, we cannot be surprised that the Jews should have understood him as they did; and the principles of those who assert him to have been a mere man, or a mere created messenger of God, furnish the most plausible apology which can be produced, in mitigation of their guilt, in denying the holy One and the just, "and killing the Prince of life."

Although the general principles of reasoning, illustrated in the Discourses, and exemplified in their application to so many passages of Scripture, might be quite sufficient to enable the reader to form his own judgment of the texts usually adduced by Unitarians in support of their denial of Christ's divinity; yet I feel it incumbent, before closing this Note, to offer a few comments on some of them, such as are pre-eminently the most plausible, and some of which, we frankly admit, to be not without their difficulty.

There are hosts of texts which Unitarians are accustomed to quote, that have really nothing to do with the point at issue. We assert that in the unity of God there is a distinction of persons:—we are met by proofs of the unity of God. We assert that Jesus Christ was God as well as man:—we are encountered with multiplied evidences of his humanity. Every person who knows any thing of the controversy is aware how incessant this

practice is, of proving what nobody denies,—of labouring to establish what both sides equally admit, and even maintain with equal firmness, as alike essential to their respective principles. On such passages it would be as trifling as it would be endless to comment one by one. The reader is left to apply to them the KEY of interpretation furnished in the Discourses. They are all in the same predicament. The refutation of one is the refutation of all. They are like the Spectator's Wooden Library; where, when you touch a single Volume, down comes an entire shelf.

The passages which follow, however, are deserving of more particular consideration.

1. 1 Cor. viii. 6. "*To us there is but one God, the Father.*" "No language," say Unitarians, "can be more explicit." But let us take the words in their connexion, and then consider what aspect they bear toward their system: "As concerning, therefore, the eating of those things that are offered in "sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that "there is no other God but one. For though there be that are called "gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords "many), yet to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, "and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and "we by him." Ver. 4—6.

I cannot content myself with standing merely *on the defensive* with regard to this passage; for I am satisfied that it not only *does not oppose* the divinity of Christ, but is *a strong testimony in its favour*;—that the thrust aimed with this weapon may not only be *parried*—but the weapon itself wrested from the hand of the adversary, and its point fairly turned against himself. To show this, let the following series of observations be attended to.

1st. The subject of the apostle's reasoning is, the lawfulness of eating meats that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. And on this subject, he first of all admits, in ver. 4th, the truth of what the abettors of the practice were disposed to urge in support of its lawfulness, that "an idol is nothing "in the world, and *that there is no other God but one.*"

2dly. He goes on, in ver. 5th, to state this last proposition more at large. It is still the proposition "*that there is no other God but one,*" that he illustrates and affirms. In ver. 4th, he announces it in general terms; and then in verses 5th and 6th, proceeds to establish it. How then does he do this?

3dly. When he says, in verse 5th, "though there be that are called gods "whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many, and lords many," it is obvious, that the *gods many*, and *lords many*, are both included in the more general and comprehensive phrase, those "*called gods* whether in "heaven or in earth." The same beings, or supposed beings, which he first calls by the single appellation "*gods*," he distributes under the two appellations of *gods* and *lords*. The *lords many*, then, belonged to the number of the *heathen deities*, as well as the *gods many*. He uses both appellations, that he may include them *all*; for by these two appellations the Jews were

accustomed, in general, to denominate the divinities of the Gentile nations.

4thly. If this be the case, then, unless we would deprive the apostle's argument of all consistency, we must not consider him as excluding from the claims and honours of deity "*the one Lord Jesus Christ.*" The point to be proved was not, whether there were or were not various beings, of eminent power, in subordination to God; but whether there were any more than one only, that should receive divine homage and worship. He affirms that there is *one only.* But *how* does he affirm this? By opposing to the "gods many, and lords many" of the Gentiles—that is, as we have seen, to the *deities* of the Gentiles, to those "*called gods*, whether in heaven or in "earth,"—by opposing to these, not "one God the Father" only, but "one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ." The proposition, therefore, "There is no other God but one," (which is the proposition to be established) must be considered as identified in the reasoning, not with the simple proposition "to us there is but one God the Father," but with the complex proposition, "to us there is one God the Father, and one "Lord Jesus Christ." The "one Lord Jesus Christ" is as directly opposed to the idol deities of the heathen as the "one God the Father," is.

5thly. When the apostle calls the Father, *God*, and Jesus Christ, *Lord*, he makes it, at the same instant, abundantly clear, that he did not mean to be understood, as if either *Christ* was *not God*, or the *Father not Lord.* For, in the very same exclusive terms in which he affirms there is "*one God the* "*Father*," he also affirms, there is "*one Lord Jesus Christ.*" The argument, therefore, which would exclude Jesus Christ from Deity, would equally exclude the Father from Lordship, or dominion. It would subject mankind, or Christians rather, to Jesus Christ *alone*, to the entire exclusion of the Father. There is no evading this consequence. It is vain to say, that Jesus Christ is *Lord, in an inferior sense.* This will not do. The affirmation that there is "*one Lord Jesus Christ*," is just as explicit as the affirmation that there is *one God the Father:*—and, if it be alleged that the Father is the *Supreme* Lord, and Jesus Christ Lord *by delegation*, then it is *not true* that to us there is but ONE *Lord.*

6thly. This view is confirmed by the language here used respecting the "one Lord Jesus Christ." "To us there is but one God the Father, *of* "*whom* are all things, and we *in him;* and one Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom* "are all things, and we *by him;*"—all things which are *of* the Father, are, in their utmost latitude, here affirmed to be *by* the Lord Jesus Christ; and and that in the very same terms in which, elsewhere, all things are said to be *by* the Father.—Rom. xi. 36. Heb. ii. 10, &c.

I conclude, therefore, in the words of an author before referred to, and from whom I have, in part, taken this argument: "Itaque hoc dictum "divinitati Christi veræ non adversatur; sed multo magis eam commendat "et confirmat: docetque simul, etsi dari debet, Patrem esse ἵνα θεὸν, ἐξ οὗ τὰ "πάντα, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν; et Jesum Christum esse ἵνα κύριον δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, καὶ ἡμεῖς δι'

" *αυτον*, unum tamen solummodo esse Deum; qui non multiplicatur, quan-
" quam divinitatis jus et imperium his binis tribuitur." Royaard's Dia-
tribe, &c. p. 182.—" This text, then, is not in opposition to the proper
" deity of Jesus Christ; but rather, greatly favours and establishes it. Its
" doctrine is, that, admitting the Father to be the 'one God, of whom are
" 'all things, and we in him' (or rather, '*for* him') and Jesus Christ to be
" the 'one Lord, by whom are all things, and we by him,' yet there is one
" God only; who is not multiplied, although the claims and authority of
" Godhead are ascribed to both."

II. A due attention to the observations made on this passage will leave little difficulty as to the next, Eph. iv. 4—6. where the apostle, in enumerating the bonds of Christian unity, says, amongst other things,—" there is *one* " *Lord*," and " *one God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, " and in you all."

1. The same observation holds here as on the preceding text, viz. that the argument which would exclude the " *one Lord*" from the claims of *Deity*, would equally exclude the " *one Father*" from the claims of *Lordship*.

2. The same things that are here said of the Father, are elsewhere said of the Son. See John ii. 31. Rom. ix. 5. Rom. x. 12. Col. i. 17. Heb. i. 3. &c.

III. John xvii. 3. " This is life eternal, that they might know *thee the only* " *true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This text has been characterized as " held deservedly dear by those who advocate the doctrine " of the proper unity of God." Unitarians are fond of thus considering themselves " as the only advocates of the doctrine of the *proper unity* of " God." We cannot allow them the title. The *proper* unity of God, is the unity which *really belongs to him*; the unity which is ascribed to him in his own word. And, whether or not this is a unity in which there subsists distinction, is precisely the question in debate. If the Scriptures affirm it to be so, then *Trinitarians* are the advocates of the *proper*, that is of the *true*, unity of God. The text before us is regarded by Unitarians as decisive of the whole controversy; as absolutely incapable of being reconciled to the doctrine of the Trinity. On this text, then, let the reader observe:—

1st. When the Father is addressed as " the true God," and " the only " true God," he is so denominated, in distinction from *all false gods*,—from the idols of the heathen;—to the exclusion of those " quos falsa gentium " persuasio introduxerat;"*—" whom the false belief of the Gentiles had " introduced." To confirm this, let the reader compare 2 Chron. xv. 3, 8. Jer. x. 10. 1 Thes. i. 9.

2dly. We have formerly seen that, by this very writer, the same title of " *the true God*," is expressly given to Jesus Christ; and with the same distinction too from idols. See 1 John v. 20, 21; compared with chap. i. 1, 2.; and the preceding Discourses, pp. 94—98. We have seen, too, the

* Grotius, as quoted by Whitby.

manner in which John speaks of "THE WORD" in chapter i. 1—3, as well as in other parts of his Gospel history. The Evangelist surely does not contradict himself; and, after having explicitly affirmed in one passage, "the Word was God," exclude him from all the claims of Deity in the other. If, therefore, there be any principle, by the application of which the language of John xvii. 3. may be explained in consistency with the language of John i. 1—3. and of all the other passages which assert the Divinity of Christ, more simply and easily than the language of John i. 1—3, and of all these other passages, can be reconciled with the Unitarian interpretation of John xvii. 3.; that principle ought to be adopted. Such a principle, we are of opinion, is afforded by the *official character* of Jesus Christ. It is in *this* character that he here speaks of himself—"Jesus Christ *whom thou hast sent.*" We have before shown, that there is no inconsistency between Jesus possessing *Divine dignity*, and his being *sent*, when he is considered as having voluntarily assumed the official character of Mediator. Now, in this text, the Father is distinguished from *all false deities*, as "the *only true God*," and he is distinguished from *Jesus Christ*, as having "*sent him*:"—and the "knowledge" of the character of God, as the God of salvation, and of the person and work of Christ as the Saviour, the Mediator between God and men, is declared to be "eternal life."

3dly. A parallel case or two will serve to show the inconclusiveness of the Unitarian argument. We have already seen that Jesus Christ is called "the true God," as well as the Father, and that therefore by the phrase "the *only* true God," he cannot intend to exclude himself from the claims and honours of Deity. Speaking of "the appearing of our Lord Jesus "Christ," Paul says, in 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. "Which in his times He shall "show, who is the blessed and *only* POTENTATE, the KING OF KINGS AND "LORD OF LORDS; who *only* hath immortality." Supposing this to refer to THE FATHER, as Unitarians must of course interpret it;—we know that there is *another* "POTENTATE," even He who "hath on his vesture and "on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS:" and that the Lord Jesus is called "the FIRST and the LAST, and THE LIVING "ONE;" who "*in the beginning* laid the foundations of the earth, and of "whose hands the heavens are the workmanship;" that there is therefore *another* who "*hath immortality.*" The word *only*, then, does not, either when put before "Potentate," or before "immortality," exclude Christ from the possession of these attributes.—Again: Solomon says to Jehovah, "Thou *only* knowest the hearts of all the children of men;" 1 Kings viii. 39.; yet Jesus says of himself, "I am He that searcheth the reins and the "hearts;" Rev. ii. 23. If the exclusive particle *only*, does not, in this case, although not less explicit, deny to Jesus the attribute of omniscience; neither does the phrase "the only true God," applied to the Father, divest him of his proper divinity. Suppose Jesus to have addressed the Father, as "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, "who only hath immortality;" or as the Being "who alone knew the hearts

" of all the children of men;"—these forms of adoration would not, we have seen, have excluded himself from the possession of the same attributes; for of himself the same things are actually affirmed: and yet these forms are in effect equivalent to that by which he *does* address him, " the only true God."

IV. Mark xiii. 32. Our Lord, speaking of the day of judgment, says, " But " of that day and that hour knoweth no one, no not the angels which are " in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father."

It is foolish to talk of such passages as if they contained no difficulty. Let us rather frankly admit the difficulty which the mode of expression involves, and endeavour to weigh it in an even balance. " If any other " being besides the Father were God," it has been said, " he would have " known the day of judgment. Since, therefore, the Father alone knew this " day, it is manifest that He alone is the omniscient God: "* " The Scrip- " ture teaches us that the knowledge of Christ was not only *derived*, but also " *limited*. For he himself asserted, that he did not know the day of general " judgment, Mark xiii. 32. The Father, who alone knew this day, must be " the only God. The Son, who knew it not, could not be the supreme God, " being inferior to him in knowledge."† On these statements I observe,—

1st. It is admitted, and forms a part of our scheme, that the Lord Jesus Christ, in his official capacity, delivered his instructions to men, *according to a commission which he had received*. This idea is expressed in the following, amongst other passages: " God, who, at sundry times, and in divers man- " ners, spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these " last days, spoken unto us by his own Son."—" My doctrine is not mine, " but his that sent me."—" He that sent me is true; and I speak to the " world those things which I have heard of him."—" For I have not spoken " of myself; but the Father who sent me he gave me a commandment what " I should say, and what I should speak:—and I know that his command- " ment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father " said unto me, so I speak."‡ *In this sense* we have no objection to saying that his knowledge was *derived*. He receives his official commission:—he is charged with the message he is to deliver. But then,

2dly. There are other passages which as plainly describe this same person as *the Searcher of hearts*, and as *knowing all things*; the government and judgment of the world are ascribed to him, to which functions *omniscience* is requisite; and all the proofs together of his supreme Deity, are evidences of his possessing this attribute. Here, then, is a solitary text, the only one which Unitarians have been able to produce as, in direct terms, asserting the limited extent of his knowledge. " He did not know," we are for ever reminded, " the day of judgment." It will surely be acknowledged a singular thing, that *this* should be the *sole limitation*. The Governor and Judge of

* Yates' Vind. of Unit. pp. 61, 62. † Ibid. p. 81.
‡ Heb. i. 1. John vii. 16. viii. 26. xii. 49, 50.

the world must of necessity be possessed of infallible *prescience*. Without this, the administration of affairs could not be managed for an hour. How, then, are we to limit this prescience? It seems strange to think, that He who is to conduct the government of mankind, with a view to the final judgment, and who is himself, in the close, to occupy the throne as universal Judge, should be in *absolute* ignorance of the time when the end was to come. He himself describes the solemn transactions of that approaching day, when the "Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels "with him, when he shall sit on the throne of his glory, and when all nations "shall be gathered together before him." He tells us, that "*the hour* is "coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall "come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they "that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation." Yet, according to the Unitarian hypothesis, he did not know, any more than man or angel, when these things were to be. Nay, more; if the final judgment be meant in the text in question, then he gives a prophetic view of the general state of the world to the close of its history, yet knows not at all when that close is to arrive;—he describes himself as prescribing to his servants their respective charges "to occupy till he should come," and yet not merely leaving *them* in ignorance of the time of his return, but as ignorant of it himself as they. Such considerations render it probable, *a priori*, that the ignorance of which he speaks in the text under discussion, was not *absolute;* but that he speaks of himself in his official capacity, and affirms, that *the time of the final judgment*, the precise period of the duration of the world, did not come within the limits of that commission which he had received of the Father,—formed no part of his official instructions, as a messenger to mankind.

3dly. In Acts i. 7. in reply to the question of his apostles, "Lord, wilt "thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus says, *more generally*, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, *which the* "*Father hath put in his own power.*" Are we hence to infer, that our blessed Lord was unacquainted, not merely with the day of judgment, but with the times and seasons in general? This is not pretended, and would be contrary to fact; the very chapter in which the controverted words occur, demonstrating the contrary. But these "times and seasons" "*it was not* "*for them to know.*" The Father had "put them in his own power." Not that *Jesus himself* was ignorant of them, and on that account unable to give the information desired; but it formed no part of his instructions at that time to make them known. They were secret things which belonged to God. May not our Lord, then, in the passage under controversy, be understood as affirming the same thing with respect to *the day of judgment*, which he here affirms respecting "*the times and seasons*" in general?

4thly. It is plain that if *angels* had known "that day and that hour," it must have been *by communication;*—that if *men* had known it, it must also have been *by communication*. That neither man nor angel knew it, is equiva-

lent to—that God had not communicated the knowledge of it to them. It is of *knowledge received by communication* that our Saviour speaks:—and as, in the passages before referred to, and in many others, he is represented, and represents himself, as sustaining an official character, and bearing a commission from the Father to men; the whole of the difficulty consists in considering him in Mark xiii. 32. as speaking of himself in this, his official capacity, and declaring that the time of the judgment was not among the things *communicated to him* as the commissioned messenger of the Father; —that it was to remain *a divine secret*.—It might be added, in confirmation of all this, that it is in his *prophetic character*, divulging what was to come, by commission from the Father, that our Lord had been speaking through the whole preceding part of the chapter.

In these observations, I have taken no notice of the criticism of Dr. Macknight, who thinks that the verb οἶδα has here the force of the Hebrew conjugation *Hiphil*, and signifies *to make to know*, or *to declare*.—To avoid the obvious inference, that if "*knoweth*" means *maketh known*, when it is used of men, of angels, and of the Son, it must have the same meaning as to *the Father*; which would make the text affirm, in opposition to fact, that the Father *made known* the day of judgment:—to avoid this inference, a second "*that is*" becomes, on the Doctor's hypothesis, necessary: "none maketh you to know," *that is*, "none *hath power* to make you know it." So that the verb "*to know*," is first made to signify to *make known*; and then, *to make known* means *to have power to make known*. This seems rather too much. Is it not simpler to say *at once*, that *not to know* signifies *not to have official commission to make known?*—The only parallel case which the Doctor adduces in support of his view, is 1 Cor. ii. 2. where Paul says, "I determined to know (εἰδέναι) "nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and "him crucified;" i. e. says he, I determined to make known, to preach "nothing among you but Jesus Christ." But although this may be considered as the *effect* of the verb here, it is the effect rather *by consequence* or *inference*, than by its *direct meaning*.—It can hardly be said with propriety, that "to *know* nothing," means "to *make known* nothing." It is only a strong expression of the apostle's resolution to appear among them, and to preach among them, *as if ignorant of every thing else*, but the great subject of his ministry. He came among them in the character of *an apostle of Jesus Christ*. As a man, he was acquainted with many other things; and he might be under temptations to display his knowledge. But *as an apostle*, he had one message to deliver, and he determined, in his *official capacity*, to know nothing else than that message.—In the same way, "the Son" did not "*know*" the day of judgment. He knew it not in his official capacity, as the commissioned ambassador of heaven to men. It formed no part of the Divine communications to him in this character.—This view has always appeared to me more satisfactory, than that which is commonly given, that he was ignorant of it *in his human nature*, although he knew it in his

divine:—a mode of explanation with which, I confess, I have never been so well satisfied.—The reader who wishes to see it ably stated and vindicated, may consult Dr. Smith's Script. Test. to the Messiah, Vol. II. B. III. Ch. III. pp. 337—340:—"Deity and Humanity United;" a Sermon, by the Rev. Thomas Scales of Leeds, occasioned by a Discourse of the Rev. Dr. Hutton of that place, entitled "Omniscience an Attribute of the Father only:"—and Strictures on Dr. Hutton's Sermon (of which the favourite passage in Mark is the text), by the Rev. Richard Winter Hamilton.

The last of these writers objects to the view which I have given above, as being, "on a little reflection, untenable; because, to assert that the text "speaks of 'knowledge received by communication' is at least gratuitous; "and because, as this 'knowledge' is employed indiscriminately of each "being in the passage, however rational its reference to Christ, it is of "course faulty and inconsistent when carried forward to the Father." (Strictures, &c. p. 47.)—But in this objection, two things appear to be overlooked. The first is, that with regard to the FATHER (that is, to DEITY) the "knowledge" spoken of *could not be* by communication, all Divine knowledge being necessarily absolute; and the second is, that on the subject in question the knowledge of MAN or ANGEL *could not be otherwise* than by communication. To pronounce, therefore, the assertion "*gratuitous*" that the text speaks of knowledge received by communication, is inconsiderate. An assertion is gratuitous, when the thing asserted may be otherwise than it is affirmed to be. If it can be shown, therefore, that in the mind of MAN or ANGEL, or in the mind of any creature, the knowledge of the time fixed in futurity by the Supreme Father for any of his own purposes could exist otherwise than by communication,—I shall then admit my assertion to be *gratuitous*. But when a thing cannot be otherwise, there is nothing gratuitous in affirming it so to be.—The same thing is true as to the knowledge possessed by THE FATHER. It not only is, but *must be* original: by communication it cannot be. To say, therefore, that asserting the text to speak of knowledge by communication is "faulty and incon-"sistent when carried forward to the Father," is to say nothing that has any force; for into what mind could it ever enter to "carry it forward to the "Father?" The *originality* of the FATHER'S knowledge is a thing assumed and settled. When we say, respecting the time of a Divine purpose, *No man* knows it—*no angel* knows it, we are at once sensible that if they *did* know it, it must be by communication. But when we say, *The Father alone* knows it, we have come to the source of knowledge itself, and can go no higher. The thought of communication *necessarily* ceases there.—I was not unaware of the objection which Mr. H. has stated, in adopting the view which I have given above: but, from the nature of the considerations urged in support of that view, I did not think it needful formally to anticipate it. A mind possessing the acuteness of that writer's will, I am persuaded, at

once perceive the reasonableness of what has just been advanced in reply. And I would submit to him, moreover, whether *his own* hypothesis as well as mine does not require that "knowledge received by communication" be meant in the text. Assuredly it must, whether we regard Jesus as speaking of himself *in his human nature*, or as speaking *in his official capacity*. In either case, the knowledge must be considered as *communicated* and *derived*. The question, in this instance, therefore, is not *whether it was or was not so*,—but simply *under which of the two capacities* Jesus speaks. I prefer the latter, as to my mind the simpler and more satisfactory: and, with the references which I have made, I must leave the decision to the reader's judgment. On either principle of interpretation, the ground is perfectly tenable.—In support of the hypothesis that Jesus speaks *in his human nature*, the parallel modes of expression adduced in the following passage of Mr. Scales's Sermon are certainly strong and deserving of serious consideration, and ought to rescue the principle of interpretation from the almost profane scorn with which Unitarians have treated it:—"Our Lord Jesus Christ "may speak of himself either as the Son of man, or the Son of "God,—he not only may, but does, speak of himself, sometimes in "one capacity, sometimes in another,—as possessed of a 'divine or of a "'human nature.' It is not to be charged upon him,—*it ought not to be* "*charged*, as an act of equivocation or insincerity, if he attribute to one "nature and capacity what would not be true of the other. In one place "he says, 'Now I am no more in the world;'—'me ye have not always:' "by which he intimates that he should no longer be present with his dis-"ciples;—and yet, in other places, he says, 'Lo I am with you alway;'—"'if any man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, "'and make our abode with him.'* Here it is evident that the man Christ "Jesus could with truth and sincerity deny, what Jesus, the Divine Being, "might at the same time truly and sincerely affirm; he might, without any "evasion and insincerity, deny or assert that of himself, in one capacity, "which he could not have denied or asserted in the other. *Upon scriptural* "*grounds, then, we maintain this doctrine:* and we leave it to others, to "suppose as many inconsistencies as they please; and if they dare go such "lengths, though we tremble for their temerity and impiety, to regard the "declarations of 'Him who spoke as never man spoke,' in no other "light than as mere equivocations. In the places just referred to, our "Lord denies, as to his human nature, and bodily presence, that he "would be any longer with his disciples; and yet he promises that 'he will "'come to them, and make his abode with them, and be with them alway "'even to the end of the world;' and how could he fulfil these promises, "except in his Divine nature, and by his omnipresence? He denies the

* Compare John xvii. 11. and Mark xiv. 7. with Matthew xxviii. 20. and John xiv. 23.

" knowledge of the day of judgment, but he denies it of his human nature " only, for it is elsewhere, and often said, that *he knows all things*. The endow- " ments of his human nature were communicated in a gradual manner; he " is therefore said to have 'increased in wisdom;' and consequently imper- " fection of knowledge was not inconsistent with his humanity in fact, and " cannot be urged as destructive of his deity, in argument."

V. John xiv. 28. "My Father is greater than I:"—of which words it has been said, "This testimony is so clear and explicit, that it does not admit " of illustration." (Yates' Vind. p. 69.)

Let us notice, however, in the *first* place, the connexion in which these words stand:—"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come " again unto you; if ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go to " the Father; for my Father is greater than I." In going to the Father, he was going to "the joy that was set before him;"—to the "glory that was " to follow" all his sufferings;—to the reward of his finished work. This reward, this glory, this joy, he was to receive *as Mediator*, in the capacity of *the servant of the Father*. He had "taken upon him the form of a servant:" —he was just about to "become obedient unto death, even the death of " the cross:" and "*therefore* God was highly to exalt him." It is in this sense, and in this connexion, that Jesus says, "My Father is greater than " I." Even here, therefore, our general principle of interpretation applies. We admit inferiority;—not only the inferiority of the human nature of Jesus, but *official inferiority*. And the only question is, whether he is here speaking of himself in his official capacity? If he is, it is surely not unreasonable to conceive that it is to *this* inferiority he refers.

But, *secondly*—It may sound strangely to speak of these words as a proof that he who used them was more than man, and more than a creature.— Yet my mind is not a little impressed with the improbability of a mere human prophet, or even a superangelic Messenger, assuring his fellow-men, or his fellow creatures, as of a thing of which they needed to be informed, that *God was greater than he;*—that he was *inferior to the infinite Jehovah*. We can hardly, I think, suppose a mere prophet, a good man, or any holy creature, to bring himself thus into comparison with his Creator and his God. It is one of the characteristic sentiments of all such creatures, to feel, and to own, their utter insignificance, and absolute nothingness, before the Divine Majesty. Ascend as high as you please in the scale of created existence, you only give additional strength to the improbability in question: for there will still be an *infinite* disparity between the greatness of God, and the greatness of the most exalted creatures; and the higher you go, the sentiment referred to must be supposed the more powerfully felt.—I can scarcely, therefore, imagine the words to have been used by a merely created Messenger;—nor is there any sense which I can attach to them, without an apprehension of impiety, but that which refers them to the official, Mediatorial, character of the Son of God;—as "coming forth from the Father, " and coming into the world;"—"finishing the work given him to do;"—

and returning to the Father, to receive his reward, in "fulness of joy, and "pleasures for evermore."

The same general principle of *official subordination*, without *natural inferiority*, may, without any difficulty or any direction of mine, be applied by the intelligent reader to 1 Cor. iii. 23. "Ye are Christ's and *Christ is God's*;" —and to 1 Cor. xi. 3. "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of "the woman is the man; and *the head of Christ is God*."—"Christ is "God's," as being the Divinely appointed Mediator, all whose work, on earth, and in heaven, has the glory of God for its object. "The head of "Christ is God;" by whom he was commissioned and sent, whose will he came to do, who accepted his service, and bestowed his reward.

VI. Mark x. 17, 18. "There came one running, and kneeled to him, and "asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good "but one, that is, God."

I have already noticed the folly of pretending that there are none of the passages brought forward by Unitarians against the divinity of Christ that present *any* difficulty. The true state of the question is, Whether the numerous passages understood by Trinitarians as asserting or implying his supreme Deity, are capable of a fair and consistent interpretation on the supposition of his being a mere creature? and, on the other hand, whether the passages understood by Unitarians as asserting or implying his being no more than a creature, are capable of such an interpretation, on the hypothesis of his being God and man in one person, and sustaining in that one person the official character of Mediator?

I am not aware of any passage produced on the Unitarian side of this alternative, that has greater apparent plausibility in it than the one now quoted. In these words, it is alleged, Jesus pointedly disavows supreme Godhead. Let us fairly see, then, how the matter stands.

1st. The epithet "*good*" is evidently susceptible of a higher and a lower sense. In our Lord's reply to this ruler's question, he takes it in the highest acceptation of which it is susceptible, as signifying absolute unqualified perfection. But it is an epithet often applied to *men*; Matth. v. 45. xii. 35. xxv. 21. Luke xxiii. 50. Acts xi. 24, &c. It is generally understood, too, that the Jewish doctors (whose fondness for flattering titles is, on another occasion, exposed and reproved by our Saviour) affected this style of complimentary address.

2dly. The title, it is sufficiently evident from the result, was not intended by the person who used it, to be understood in any higher sense than was applicable to a merely human being,—one whom, at the most, he considered as an eminent prophet. This is quite clear. And both these particulars, it is important to mark, for—

3dly. It was not, therefore, an address which it was at all possible for any who were present to consider it as *blasphemy* for Jesus to receive;—as implying his *making himself God*, whom alone he immediately declares in his

answer to be *good.* It could not, from its general use in application to men, be understood as expressing any thing beyond mere humanity; so that *there existed no occasion whatever why Jesus, supposing him to have been a mere human prophet, should have declined it, as an address to which the blessed God alone was entitled.* His answer, therefore, cannot be viewed as an instance of his revolting from the ascription to him of a Divine title; because, from the ordinary use of the epithet, there was no danger, or even possibility, of any such conception being formed. It is not easy, in these circumstances, to perceive any reason why Jesus should have given a reply, *disclaiming equality with God,* as Unitarians interpret his words;—because neither, on the one hand, was the person by whom he was addressed, ascribing such equality to him; nor, on the other, was there the remotest possibility of his hearers understanding him to claim such equality in accepting the title by which he was accosted.

Is the reply of Jesus, then, capable of any natural and consistent interpretation, on the supposition of his having been himself a Divine person? The two following views of it are submitted to the reader:—

1. Our Lord may be understood as framing his reply *according to the views which he knew the person by whom he was addressed to entertain concerning him.* There is no reason to suppose, that this ruler viewed our Lord as any thing more than a mere man,—a prophet,—"a teacher" (the appellation he employs) "sent from God." Considered in this light, the words of Christ convey a severe and pointed reproof to those who affected such titles of flattery, and sought "the honour that cometh from "men."

2. He may be considered as *inquiring the views of this young man,* with regard to him whom he thus so respectfully accosted, "kneeling to him," with an apparently humble acknowledgment of his superior dignity and authority. The reply will then be as if Jesus had said to him:—Why callest thou me good? None is absolutely good but one, that is God. Do you mean by your address to ascribe *this* goodness to me?—to acknowledge and honour me in my Divine character? "I and my Father are one." Dost thou believe this? Or is your salutation a mere title of flattering courtesy, to be understood as when addressed to your own Rabbies?

Let the reader, then, recollect, that on other occasions, when Jesus was charged with making himself equal with God, he never disavowed the imputation; let him keep in mind also the copious evidence already produced of his really possessing Divine dignity; and say, whether the one or the other of these senses, or a combination of both, should not be preferred to that interpretation which, without any good reason arising from the circumstances of the case, sets the words at variance with his conduct on other occasions, and with all the passages which assert or imply his divinity?

NOTE Q, page 287.

Τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ——. "ΙΣΟΣ, vel Ἴσος, η, ον. 1. *æqualis, par*, scilicet *quantitate numero, magnitudine*, etc.————2. *idem, æqualis et similis natura.* Johan. v. 18. ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ Θεῷ æqualem se faciens Deo. Act. xi. 17. τὴν ἴσην δωρεὰν ἔδωκεν, iisdem donis instruxit. Vulgatus: *eandem gratiam dedit.* Philip. ii. 6. οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, non rapinam duxit Dei personam sustinere, seu æqualem natura et majestate Deo esse, i. q. ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχειν, ubi ἴσα non, ut quibusdam videtur, positum est pro κατ' ἴσα μέρη seu ἐν ἴσοις μέρεσι, h. e. ἴσως σὺν Θεῷ, sed pro accusativo masc. singularis ἴσον. Conf. Alex. Job v. 14. x. 10. xv. 16. *Hippocrat.* Jurejurand. c. i. p. 42. ὄμνυμι ἡγήσασθαι μὲν τὸν διδάξαντά με τὴν τέχνην ταύτην ἴσα (h. e. ἴσον) γενέτησιν ἐμοῖσιν. *Homer.* Odyss. ὁ. 519. τὸν νῦν ἴσα θεῷ Ἰθακήσιοι εἰσορόωσι. *Ælian.* V. H. viii. 38. Conf. *Glassii* Philol. Sacr. p. 65. ed. *Dathii.*"——Schleusner.

As the adjective ἴσος expresses the idea of *equality*, it is natural to suppose that ἴσα, the neuter plural of the adjective used adverbially, should partake of the same signification, and denote more than mere *similarity* or *resemblance.*—Parkhurst says—"Ἴσα, neut. plur. used adverbially, *As*, occ. Phil. ii. 6. τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, *To be as God.*" He then quotes from Doddridge —"So ἴσα Θεῷ is most exactly rendered, agreeable to the force of ἴσα in many places of the LXX, which Whitby has collected in his note on this place. The proper Greek phrase for *equal to God* is ἴσον τῷ Θεῷ, which is used John v. 18."——But although in the instances adduced by Whitby, ἴσα may be considered correctly rendered by *as*, it does not follow that it conveys no more than the idea of *similarity*. Even in cases in which it would have been quite sufficient for the writer's or translator's purpose to have expressed the idea of similarity, it would be very unfair to conclude from this that similarity is all that he has actually expressed. Our words very often convey more than what is *absolutely necessary* for the occasion. To take an example or two from the occurrences of ἴσα in the LXX. Job v. 14. "They grope in the noon-day, ἴσα νυκτὶ, *as in the night.*" It might have been quite enough to have said "in *like* manner as in the night," ὡς νυκτὶ—but somewhat more is actually said, "in the *same* manner as in the night"—*equally as* in the night.—Job xi. 12. "Man is born, ἴσα ὀνῷ ἐρημίτῃ, *like* a wild ass's colt." The idea actually expressed is more than mere *resemblance:* "Man is born *on an equality with* the wild ass's colt."—Job x. 10. "Thou hast curdled me, ἴσα τυρῷ, *like* cheese," or *as* cheese. What is really expressed, however, is "in the *same* manner as cheese."—The same general remark might be applied to the other passages quoted by Whitby, viz. Job xiii. 12, 20. xv. 16. xxiv. 20. xxvii. 16. xxviii. 2. xxix. 14. xl. 15. Isa. li. 23.

In all the quotations adduced by Parkhurst from profane authors, ἴσα, although properly enough translated *as*, clearly includes the idea of *equality*. Thus

Ος ῥα νόθος μὲν ἔην, πύκα δ' ἔτρεφε διὰ Θεανὼ,
ΙΣΑ φίλοισι τέκεσσι, χαριζομένη πόσεϊ ᾧ.

"Whom, though a bastard, the generous Theano brought up carefully *as* her own children—(i. e. *on an equal footing with* her own children) to please her husband."

Iliad, B. V. l. 70, 71.

Τὸν νῦν ΤΙΣΑ ΘΕΙΓ' Ἰθακήσιοι ἰσοφόωσι.

Odyss. B. XV. l. 519.

—— τιμὴν δὲ λελόγχασιν ΤΙΣΑ ΘΕΟΙΣΙΝ.

Odyss. B. XI. l. 303.

Πρὶν μὲν γάρ σε ζωὸν ἐτίομεν ΤΙΣΑ ΘΕΟΙΣΙΝ.

Ib. l. 483.

On these instances I need not dwell. It seems evident, that in every one of them, it is not the idea of *resemblance* merely, but that of *equality* and *sameness* that is intended to be expressed.

This "being *on an equality* with God"—(or, as Dr. Smith has it, with a perfect coincidence, "*on a parity* with God")—the Apostle says, Jesus οὐχ ΑΡΠΑΓΜΟΝ ἡγήσατο.

In my Reply to Mr. Yates, proceeding upon the generally admitted rule, that in Greek, verbals in μος from the perfect passive have an active, and those in μα a passive signification—I wrote, "However similar the words "(ἁρπαγμος and ἁρπαγμα) may appear, the precise difference between them, as, "every Greek scholar knows, is, that the latter signifies a *prey* or *plunder*, "the former, the *act of preying* or *plundering*. Αρπαγμα, quod raptum est, "rapina, præda rapta.—Αρπαγμος, ipsa rapiendi actis, raptus. Heder. Lex." —I am now sensible, that this was too hasty, proceeding upon the assumption of an understood general principle in the formation of verbal nouns;—a principle which, I am satisfied, is by no means strictly adhered to in the practice of the best Greek writers. The instances, at any rate, that have been cited, in which ΑΡΠΑΓΜΟΣ is used to signify, not the *act of seizing* but the *thing seized* or *to be seized*, are, I confess, irresistible.

The conclusion from this, however, is, not that ἁρπαγμος, in the present instance, *certainly means*, or *must* mean, *a thing seized*, a *thing to be seized*, a *prey*:—it is merely, that it *may* have either this meaning or the other, the *act of eagerly seizing*, or *robbery*; and that the context must determine which.

"With regard to the noun," Dr. J. P. Smith says, "the question is, whether it denotes the *act of seizing*, or *the thing seized*;"—and he comes to the above conclusion, that we must "regard the connexion of the passage as our only criterion."—Now there is one remark which has struck me, and which I would, with all diffidence, suggest to that very able and candid critic.—It is, that, supposing the *passive* sense of the noun adopted it does not appear as if there were any good reason why it should uniformly be interpreted as signifying, not a *thing seized*, but a thing TO BE seized—an object, *to be* grasped at. A *thing seized* is a thing *acquired by the act of seizure*:

—a *prey* is not always a thing that is *yet to be got* by plundering, but also a thing *already got* in this manner;—not præda *rapienda*, but præda *rapta*. Upon this principle the Apostle's expression will signify (as Mr. Ewing renders it in his Lexicon) that he did not regard his being on an equality with God "*a state acquired by robbery.*"—I cannot help thinking that this is the sense in which the word ought to be understood in the quotations which Dr. Smith introduces from Chrysostom and from Dr. Routh. The former is—Τουτο το ισναι ισα Θεω, ουχ ως αρπαγμον ηγειτο, αλλα φυσικον.—This *being equal* to God, he did not hold as *a thing to be caught at*, but his own natural right."—Now, why render αρπαγμον in this connexion "a thing *to be* caught at?" which is apt to convey to the mind the impression of a thing *to which he did not aspire?* Chrysostom's statement is, that he *had* or *held* (ηγειτο) equality with God; and that he held this equality, not as (αρπαγμον) a *thing unduly seized*, a *thing acquired by robbery*,—but as (φυσικον) a *thing pertaining to him by nature*, or by *natural right*.—Dr. Routh's words are—"Imo vero id suscipere velim, nullum ecclesiasticum auctorem ad Nicaenorum usque tempus adduci posse, qui significari το *non alienum a se esse arbitratus est* verbis ουχ αρπαγμον ηγησατο, clare atque aperte indicaverit." "I would even pledge myself to the fact, that no Christian writer can be adduced, down to the time of the Council of Nice, who does not clearly and openly show, that he understood the words *he esteemed it not a thing to be caught at* as implying that the object was *not foreign to Jesus Christ*, but was *his own*." [Qu. To make out this sense, should not there be another *non* in the sentence, before the words *clare atque aperte indicaverit?*] Now, why, I would ask again in this instance, render the word a thing *to be caught at?* Is not the sense rather, that it was not *a thing seized*, as contradistinguished from its being *his own* —*naturally and rightfully belonging to him?*

I do not think I am hypercritical or captious in the remark. The citations from Chrysostom and Dr. Routh are contained in a note to the following sentence in the text:—"in any case, the idea is plainly indicated, "that the object intended would not have been, to Jesus Christ, an act of "seizure, an usurpation, a thing to which he had no right; but, on the "contrary, that to which he had a just claim; a claim, to waive which is "laid down by the terms of the passage, as an act of the most gracious "condescension and humiliation."—Now, there is a difference between a thing being a person's *in right*, and a person's *in actual possession*. The above modes of expression are applicable to the former case, rather than to the latter. They convey to one's mind the idea of *equality with God* (in whatever sense the phrase be understood,) being something which was his *in right*, to which he was *justly entitled*, and which he *might* have *caught at* and appropriated, in full consistency with valid claims.—I cannot but think, on the contrary, that the Apostle's idea is that of *actual possession;* and that this idea is expressed, not only in the phrase, "being in the form "of God," but also in the one under consideration, "he did not regard his being on a parity with God as a thing *acquired by seizure*," but held it in

possession, (to use Chrysostom's term,) as φυσικον, a thing *naturally his own*.

If ἁρπαγμον, in the text, could be considered as meaning "a thing to be "eagerly *retained*," instead of "eagerly *caught at*," I should have less objection to the whole phrase ουχ ἁρπαγμον ηγησατο το ειναι ισα Θεω being understood as belonging to the *apodosis* of the sentence, as Dr. Smith contends it ought: —for then, his "making himself of no reputation," &c. would mean, not merely his *waiving a claim*, but his *laying aside* (in the only way, that is, in which it was possible for him to do so) the glory which *essentially belonged to him*.—In this view, it would make no material difference in the sense, whether the clause were considered as pertaining to the *protasis* or to the *apodosis*.—I confess myself, however, still inclined to prefer the former view; and I am very little solicitous whether ἁρπαγμος be understood in its active or passive sense, of either of which it is admitted to be susceptible—whether it be interpreted of the *act of robbery*, or of the *thing acquired by robbery*,—the effect in either case being much the same. The following appears to be a literal version of the original words:—"Who, subsisting in "the form of God, did not reckon it an act of robbery (or a thing acquired "by robbery) to be on an equality with God; yet emptied himself, assuming "the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and, having been "found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, "even the death of the cross."

Had it not been for the sake of adhering as literally as possible to the original term, I should have adopted the translation of the French Bible, which seems to me to convey the true sense, and have rendered ἁρπαγμον *a usurpation*, or *an act of usurpation*:—"Lequel, etant en forme de Dieu, "n'a point regardé, (comme) *une usurpation* d' être égal a Dieu."

I am aware of the objection to considering ουχ ἁρπαγμον ηγησατο το ειναι ισα Θεω as belonging to the description of the Redeemer's previous state,—that if it had been so intended by the writer, the construction of the whole sentence would have been different; that, instead of ος εν μορφη θεου υπαρχων, ουχ ἁρπαγμον ηγησατο, &c. we should have had ος εν μορφη Θεου υπαρχων, και ουχ ηγησαμενος ἁρπαγμον το ισα ειναι Θεω, εκενωσεν ἑαυτον'—or, in English—instead of "Who, being in the "form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; yet divested "himself, &c.—we should have had, "Who, being in the form of God, and "not thinking it robbery to be equal with God, divested himself," &c.—The objection has been sanctioned by some Trinitarian critics:—"The "error of the common version seems to have arisen from the translators "considering the *whole* sixth verse as the catascue of the protasis in the "fifth; a construction which would have required a copulative, and a "second participle; thus, και ουχ ἁρπαγμον ηγησαμενος κ. τ. λ. "To any one who "impartially considers the words, it will appear evident, that the catascue "lies in the words εν μορφη Θεου υπαρχων, and that the apodosis then imme- "diately commences."*—"The first question is, How far, in the construc-

* Ecl. Rev. Vol. V. Part I. p. 336.

"tion of the sentence, does that part extend, which was called by the "ancient rhetoricians the *protasis;* that is, the proposal of the terms or "considerations, which prepare the way for the rest of the sentence, called "the *apodosis*, and from which it is to flow as a deduction, or application to "the matter in hand. The common version supposes this point to be at "the close of the third member, which therefore would run thus: 'Who, "existing in the form of God, and esteeming it no usurpation to be as "'God:" and then the *apodosis* would follow, 'yet emptied himself,' &c. "But this, so far as I can perceive, would have required a difference in the "words"—[namely, that just given above.] Script. Test. to Mess. Vol. II. p. 377.—At the hazard of being charged with partiality, I must say, that I see no sufficient ground for this criticism. We may conceive that the construction proposed to be substituted for the common one would be more *elegant*—perhaps more *customary;* but to affirm that it is *required*, is too much. If αλλα be rendered "*yet*," the ordinary construction appears to me to be perfectly consistent with Greek idiom; and what is more, I cannot but view it as bringing out, with greater force and emphasis, the sentiment of the apostle, than the other:—because, by the use of a particle, expressly employed for the purpose, it fixes the notice of the reader more forcibly to the act of gracious condescension, which it is the special object of the apostle to recommend to attention and to imitation.

Let the English reader compare the two in his own language:—"Who "being in the form of God, and not accounting it any usurpation to be "equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the "form of a servant:"—"Who, being in the form of God, did not account "it any usurpation to be equal with God; yet made himself of no reputa- "tion, and took upon him the form of a servant."—Although the sentiment expressed in both these sentences is the same, does not the particle "*yet*" in the latter, fasten the attention of the mind more forcibly on the idea of *transition* from one state to another, and the gracious condescension therein displayed?

Now, that the adversative αλλα is susceptible of the sense thus put upon it, the practice of the Greek language abundantly confirms. It frequently requires to be rendered "*yet;*" and, indeed, the rendering is quite in harmony with its proper etymological import, as expressing something *other than*, or *very different from*, what has been previously mentioned. It would appear to have this sense of "*yet*" oftener in the writings of Paul, than in any other parts of the New Testament. "ΑΛΛΑ. Conjunctio, tam inter "*copulativas* quam inter adversativas a grammaticis numerata:"—"7. *tamen*, "*sed tamen.* Johan. xvi. 20. 1 Cor. iv. 15: viii. 6: ix. 2, 12: 2 Cor. xiii. 4. "Col. ii. 5." &c. Schleusner.—Understanding it in this sense here, the meaning is complete, and the construction natural: "Who, being in the "form of God, thought it not any usurpation to be on an equality with "God; YET made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of "a servant:" i. e. "*although* possessing the high dignity of *equality* with

" God, he, *notwithstanding*, divested himself of it, assuming the form of a " servant."

From what has been said it will have been manifest, that Trinitarians who differ with regard to the critical arrangement of the clauses in this passage, are yet agreed, and agreed in perfect consistency with their respective views, in regarding it as a declaration and proof of Jesus Christ being actually *on a parity with God*.—The few observations which follow have more immediate reference to Unitarian exposition.

The phrase " being *in the form of God*," is generally interpreted by those of this school as meaning, that, when on earth, he *resembled God in the possession of extraordinary power and wisdom*; and, translating the clause on which we have already been commenting, " he *did not esteem it a prey* " *to be as God*," they explain it of his " *not grasping at divine honours*."—Now, I can affix no idea to this, unless it mean, that he did not pervert the power with which he was endowed to the purpose of his own aggrandizement and glory; that he did not, that is, contravene, in the exertion of that power, the end of his mission. This, then, proceeds on the supposition of the *possibility* at least of his having done otherwise;—on the supposition of divine power having been placed so entirely *at his discretion*, that he *might*, had he been so inclined, have used it for his own honour, in opposition to the honour of him that sent him. Let this supposition, then, be fairly examined. We cannot allow it to be *qualified* by any *condition*; as of the Almighty *withdrawing* the communicated power, should any symptom have appeared of an impious inclination to pervert it. For, in that case, it was *not* at his discretion, any more than at the discretion of other prophets. And, if the supposition be not thus qualified, how gross is the absurdity which it involves!—the power of God placed at the discretion of a creature, who has it in his option, whether it shall be employed *for* the Divine purposes, or *against* them. The *possibility* of the *latter* is clearly involved in the Unitarian *hypothesis*: and if this be *hypothetically possible*, we are warranted, for argument's sake, to *suppose* it realized;—in which case, we shall have *a creature* wielding Almighty power against the Almighty;—the infinite God absolutely outwitted by the agent to whose discretion he has transferred his power!

But the two clauses, he was " in the *form of God*," and he " took on him the *form of a servant*," may surely be considered as mutually explanatory of each other. Now I think it appears from the frequency with which the Scripture speaks of Christ as *a servant*, receiving and executing a commission, &c. that his " taking upon him the *form of a servant*," means, agreeably to this prevailing phraseology of Scripture, his voluntarily assuming this relation to the Father—his actually *becoming a servant*—appearing among men in this character or capacity:—in which case, " *the form of God*" must have a corresponding signification, and mean his existing in the character or capacity of Deity.—This view receives further confirmation from the other phrase here used, " he was made in *the likeness* of men,"

which very obviously means his becoming in reality a man.—Compare Rom. viii. 4.

It is sufficiently clear that his "being" (or *subsisting*, ὑπάρχων) "*in the "form of God*"—stands here in contrast with his "taking, or assuming, the "*form of a servant.*" He subsisted, then, "in the form of God," *previously* to his assuming "the form of a servant." When, then, did he assume the form of a servant? If he was a mere man, it is not easy to say either when or how.—Indeed, if he was a mere man, or a mere creature, however exalted, it is difficult to conceive how he could at all, with propriety, be said to assume the form of a servant. No creature can properly be said to assume, or take upon himself, the station, or work, which the supreme God is pleased expressly to assign to him. Every creature, without exception, is, by his very status as a creature, the servant of his Creator. His very creation necessarily, and from the first moment of his being or of his capacity for action, constitutes him such, in whatever department it may please his Maker to employ him.—But if the Lord Jesus subsisted previously as God, he took the form of a servant when he "*was made in the "likeness of men*," and came to accomplish "*a work given him to do.*"

But of this phrase, too,—"being made in the likeness of men,"—Unitarians have their own interpretation. The truth is, the whole passage, like many others, affords a striking illustration of the unexampled and arbitrary manner in which words and phrases are treated by them. I do not refer to their rendering "*οὐχ ἡγήσατο ἁρπαγμὸν*," "*he did not esteem it a prey;*" for this is the phrase in their translation for which most at least may be said. But what shall we say of "*being made in the likeness of men*," signifying his being made, not in the likeness of the *human race*, or *kind*, but his being made in the likeness of *common and ordinary mortals*?—and then, "being found *in fashion* "*as a man*," must be understood in the same manner.

The language used respecting *Samson*, is commonly referred to by Unitarians as supporting this interpretation. The following is the note of the "Improved Version," on the phrase "in the likeness of men:"—"Of com- "mon and ordinary mortals. See Mr. Lindsay, ibid. Christ, invested with "miraculous powers, was in the form of God; but, declining to use them "for his own personal advantage, he appeared like any other frail and weak "mortal. So Judges xvi. 7. Samson says, 'If they bind me, I shall be 'weak, "'and be as a man;' i. e. as our translators very properly supply the word, "'as *another* man.'"—I should not think this worthy of serious notice, except as a farther exemplification, not only of the slenderness, but the unfairness, of the shifts of Unitarian criticism. In the passage referred to, Samson says, "Then shall I be weak, and shall be כְּאַחַד הָאָדָם;" which may either simply signify, "as *one of mankind*;" or it may be understood with an emphasis—"AS ONE MAN,"—of which the meaning will be sufficiently plain. The Philistines had found to their cost, that, while possessed of his extraordinary power, he was *ipse agmen*; the might of a numerous host being concentrated in his single arm. But when that forsook

him, he became as *a single man.* The expression is the same in verse 11th; and in the 17th verse it is varied. He there says, "I shall become weak, "and shall be ככל האדם, as *any* man," or "as *every* man," or "as *all* "*men.*" The criticism, then, is unfair. But besides this—in what way was it that Samson became as other men? It was by the loss of that in which he had before excelled other men; by the loss of his supernatural strength; by his "becoming weak." But when did Jesus become as other men in *this* way? He was "in the form of God," say Unitarians, by the possession of miraculous powers. Was he, then, "made in the likeness of "men" by being divested of these powers? This alone could assimilate his case to that of Samson. Yet when was he thus divested of his power? —or when did he voluntarily resign it? Never, certainly.—But he did not "use it for his own personal advantage." Of the *supposition* involved in this of the possibility of his having done so, enough has been said formerly. I have now only to ask the reader, if he thinks it a simple and reasonable interpretation, according to which "being *made in the likeness of* "*men,*" and "*found in fashion as a man,*" are the phrases used to signify that he *did not employ his miraculous powers to his own personal advantage?*

The objection stated in the Discourses against the Unitarian exposition, "*he did not esteem it a prey to be as God,*" seems to me, after every attempt to expose it, to remain in full force; namely, the absurdity of supposing it to be held up as "the peculiar subject of our admiration and astonishment— "the example which, of all examples, we are most sedulously to imitate,— "that a creature, a man, possessing, by Divine communication, a singular "portion of miraculous power and wisdom, did not pervert these high "endowments to his own selfish ends!—that he was not guilty of the most "heaven-daring presumption and impiety!—that he absolutely did not so "abuse the gifts bestowed upon him, as to enter into a kind of competition "for glory with that Supreme Being from whom he derived his wisdom and "his power!—*Is* this,—*can* this *be*—the singular virtue, which we are "called to admire and to imitate, as the brightest model of excellence that "ever was exhibited on earth?" that he did *not* thus "grasp at Divine "honours?"—that he did *not* advance a claim to *equality with God?*—that he did *not* prostitute the highest gifts of Heaven—gifts never conferred on another besides himself—by making them the foundation of a blasphemous requisition for himself of the honours peculiar to Deity?—that he did *not,* like another Devil, and a worse one than the first, announce himself on a level with the Most High, set himself at the head of a new rebellion, and, by turning communicated omnipotence—(for what power short of omnipotence could accomplish the works which he wrought?)—by turning communicated omnipotence against the God that had committed it to his discretion, impiously attempt to "divide heaven against itself?"—This, it seems, is the *negative* part of Christ's example. This is what he *might have done,* and *did not do.*—But I must say more. *Is it true* that Jesus did *not* claim *equality with God?* Let us not forget, that, if he was a mere

creature, to have done so would have been the very acme of impiety—the extreme point of wickedness, beyond which we cannot conceive a creature to go. Yet my views lead me to the conviction, that, if Jesus was a mere human prophet, it will be no easy matter to clear him of this fearful imputation. By Unitarians themselves, it cannot be questioned, that, on different occasions, as has before been remarked, he used expressions respecting himself, which led his hearers to pronounce him guilty of the blasphemy of "*making himself equal with God*," and of, "though a man, *making himself* "*God*." And as little can it be questioned, that, in whatever way his replies may be explained, he never did use language (easy as it would have been for him to do so) that *fairly took off this impression from their minds*; although, if he was no more than "a holy man of God," "his soul and all "that was within him" must have been stirred up by the charge to indignant grief, and unutterable loathing. It is to my mind an additional ground of conviction, that the Unitarian rendering—"*he did not esteem it a prey to* "*be as God*," is not a just one—that it does not appear to be *consistent with fact*.

NOTE R, p. 346.

On 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. "*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture* "*is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by* "*the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the* "*Holy Ghost*."

In the text, I have rendered the words "no prophecy is—ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως—"of *its own* or of *self*-interpretation."—In a course of Lectures on the Epistles of Peter, delivered many years ago, I was led to adopt this view of the passage, as I did not feel at all satisfied with any of the different explanations usually given; not at the time aware of the view being as old as the Vulgate translation of the Bible.—The following *Extract* from a paper in which it was communicated to the Editor of the Missionary Magazine, in reply to a query by a correspondent, will illustrate a little the grounds on which it was preferred to other explanations.

"In verse 20, the apostle gives them a particular rule or advice for their "direction in the study of the prophecies. 'Knowing this *first*,' as a matter "of prime importance toward the understanding and right interpretation of "the prophetic word, 'that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private "interpretation.' Our translators have needlessly inserted the word *any*, "which has led many to suppose various *kinds* of private interpretation "which the apostle meant to disapprove and warn against. The word "translated *interpretation*, is by some rendered *invention*. This seems "objectionable for the following reasons: 1. It is an unusual acceptation of "the word (ἐπίλυσις), the proper meaning of which is *untying* or *solution*. "2. It makes the following verse, (which contains, according to this "explanation, the same truth,) a reason for itself. 3. It is supposing the "apostle to be giving, not a direction for the understanding of the prophe-

"cies, but an *inducement* to the study of them, arising from their divine "original, which is not peculiar to them, but common to every other part "of Scripture; whereas it seems to be more consistent with the scope of "the passage, as connected with verse 19, to consider him as laying down "a rule of interpretation. The rule or direction appears to be this: that "'no prophecy of Scripture is (ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως) of *its own*, i. e. of the pro-"'phet's own interpretation.' We are not to look to the prophets for an "interpretation of their own predictions. If we would rightly understand "their meaning, we must examine them in connexion with the events by "which they have been fulfilled. The reason is plain, verse 21, 'For the "'prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God "'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The prophets did not "fully understand their own predictions, 1 Peter i. 10—12. In vain, "therefore, surely, must we expect to form accurate ideas of their meaning "and reference, if we examine them *by themselves*. It is plain from the "whole context, that the apostle has particularly in view the predictions "relative to the Messiah," which form the chief part of Old Testament "prophecy. Now let it be remarked, that the conduct of the Jews "respecting these very prophecies, clearly shows that the direction here "given is one of no small importance. The Jews, before the coming of "Christ, 'searched the Scriptures;' they affixed ideas of their own to the "prophecies respecting the Messiah; and so firmly rivetted were these ideas "in their minds, that, in spite of the minute and striking accomplishment of "prophecy in Jesus of Nazareth, they rejected, with impious disdain, his "divinely authenticated claims. See John v. 39, 40, 45—47. In searching "the Scriptures, they did right; but in taking up such determined views of "unfulfilled predictions, the event showed they were wrong. From the "Acts of the Apostles, it is evident, that the manner of their preaching to "the Jews corresponded perfectly with this idea. Their great object was "to convince them, from their own Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.

"The prophets and the apostles wrote under the influence of the same "Divine Spirit, and the grand subject of their testimony is the same. "Acts xxvi. 22, 23. 1 Peter i. 10—12. The result of the whole then "seems to be, that the full revelation of the Christ, in the history of Jesus "contained in the New Testament, which is the preaching of the apostles "imbodied and rendered permanent, forms the proper *key* to the prophecies "of the Old, without which we cannot unlock them ourselves, or lay open "their contents intelligibly to others. By giving heed to the prophecies in "connexion with their glorious fulfilment, we shall 'grow in grace, and in "'the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour,' and gain increasing stores of "'the unsearchable riches of Christ,' 'the sum and substance of the word, "'the sinner's all in all.' The proper manner of applying this key might "be the subject of separate consideration."—Miss. Mag. for May 1804. Vol. IX. pp. 217, 218.

It was with great satisfaction that, a good many years after, I found the

translation of verse 20th, on which this interpretation of the passage is founded, sanctioned by the high critical authority of the late Bishop Horsley, in the first of his admirable series of Sermons on Prophecy, founded on this text:—"It must be confessed," says he, "that all this obscurity and "incoherence appears in the first face of the passage, as it is expressed in "our English Bibles. The truth is, that the English word *private* doth "but very darkly, if at all, convey to the understanding of the English "reader the original word to which it is meant that it should answer. The "original word denotes that peculiar appropriation of the thing with which "it is joined to something else previously mentioned, which is expressed "in English by the word *own* subjoined to the pronouns of possession: "*our own* power; *his own* blood; a prophet of *their own*. In all these "places, the Greek word which is rendered by the words *our own, his* "*own, their own*, is that same word which in this text is rendered by the "word *private*. The precise meaning of the original, therefore, may be "thus expressed—'Not any prophecy of Scripture is of *self-interpretation*.' "This compound word, 'self-interpretation' contains the exact and full "meaning of the two Greek words which our translators have rendered by "'private interpretation,' and with which no two separate words can be "found in our language exactly to correspond. The meaning is just the "same as might be thus expressed: 'Not any prophecy of Scripture is its "own interpreter.'—It is in this sense that the passage is rendered in the "French Bible of the church of Geneva; and, what is of much importance "to observe, it is so rendered in the Latin translation called the Vulgate, "which the church of Rome upholds as the unerring standard of the sacred "text."—Horsley's Sermons, Vol. II. pp. 12, 13.

NOTE S, p. 429.

It is obvious that every thing here depends on the meaning of terms. A man may profess the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, while he attaches his own sense to the words;—a sense utterly anti-scriptural, or grossly deficient.—A scriptural belief that Jesus is the Christ, supposes a scriptural knowledge of the person, and character, and work of the Christ. It is very true that, while Jesus abode on earth, his disciples, although they believed in him as the Christ, the Son of God, and confessed him in that character, were in great darkness with regard to the nature of that work, which he had come to accomplish. They owned him as "*having the words of eternal life*," John vi. 67—69. and therefore must have expected more from their adherence to him than mere temporal honours, although the expectation of these was, through mistake and prejudice, too predominant in their minds. They looked for secular advantages; but they looked also for something higher:—and perhaps this double expectation might go far to account for the apparent confusion and contradiction in their manner of speaking at different times. While they hoped for eternal life, they as yet knew not well *how*

that blessing was to be obtained for them by their Lord. In the midst of darkness and prejudice, however, they were upright, sincere, and teachable. They "*continued in his word,*" and thus showed themselves to be "his disciples indeed:"—and in due time his declaration was fulfilled in their happy experience,—"*Ye shall know the truth,* and the truth "shall make you free." John viii. 31, 32.——It is very obvious, that their situation *then* was very different from what *ours* is *now;* and, indeed, from what their own was very soon after, when, upon Christ's ascension, they received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. It is not surely to the partial and mistaken notions of the apostles during the personal ministry of their Master, that we are to look for instruction as to what we must believe concerning Christ; but to the views which they held and taught, after their illumination on the day of Pentecost. However much we may wonder at their previous ignorance, when we consider the plainness of the prophecies respecting the sufferings and atoning death of the Messiah, along with the typical import of the law; yet the state of their minds during this period of ignorance is not to be considered as the standard of our faith. Atonement by the death of Christ, and acceptance with God on the ground of that atonement, may belong to the essence of the gospel, although they did not at that time understand it. Peter, during Christ's lifetime, when his Master foretold his approaching death, said, "That be far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee!" Matth. xvi. 22. The same Peter afterwards speaks of the death of his Master in a very different strain indeed:—"Who, his own self, bare our sins in his "own body on the tree:"—"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just "for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God;"—"Ye were not "redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain "conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious "blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter ii. 24. iii. 18. i. 18, 19.—It is not surely from Peter in his state of prejudice, and darkness, and perplexity, but from Peter, after his Lord had verified to him the promise, "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you "into *all truth,*"—that we are called to learn the true nature of the gospel.—Mr. Fuller touches on this point, with his usual judgment and discrimination, in his Comp. View of the Calv. and Soc. Systems, Letter X. on Charity, pp. 198—204, third edition.

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